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4 **TRB FROM WASHINGTON** ..... LET THEM EAT TARTS
Hollywood hobnobs with the homeless.

6 **CORRESPONDENCE** ..... Nader on Jock, budget on the block, &c.

7 **THE EDITORS** ..... TRUTHS FOR EL NORTE
Some lessons from Latin America's latest democratic leader.
NOTEBOOK
Lenny Skutnik's heirs, Robert Pinsky's successor.

9 **JACOB WEISBERG** ..... POSTCARD CHICAGO: CRAZY EDDIES

10 **ROBERT WHITEHILL** ..... APARTHEID'S OIL
The Arabs' secret business with South Africa.

11 **MARTIN PLISSNER** ..... FRONT WINDOW
Y'all better start paying attention to the 1988 version of Super Tuesday.

13 **RICHARD NEELY** ..... BARTER IN THE COURT
Divorce laws force women to trade money for kids.

16 **FRED BARNES** ..... THE SHAKING OF A PRESIDENT
On the election trail in the Philippines, Ferdinand Marcos, the embittered dictator, fights for his life.

20 **PHILIP WEISS** ..... THE MAN WHO FELL TO EARTH
The exotic adventures of the ultimate U.N. civil servant.

24 **STANLEY KAUFFMANN** ..... ON FILMS: MORE MANHATTAN BLUES
Hannah and Her Sisters stars the same old Woody Allen persona plus some life-size puppets.

25 **ROBERT BRUSTEIN** ..... ON THEATER: THE INFIDELITY PLAY
Michael Frayn's *Benefactors*, an overrated import; two homegrown David Mamet miniatures.

28 **GERTRUDE HIMMELFARB** ..... THE GROUP
Britain's impressive crop of Marxist historians.

36 **RICHARD RODRIGUEZ** ..... MAGICAL MYSTERY TOUR
So Far from God: A Journey to Central America by Patrick Marnham

38 **JIM POWELL** ..... POEM *Sappho: To Aphrodite*

39 **HENRY FAIRLIE** ..... THE SCREWTAPE COLUMNS
Right Reason by William F. Buckley, Jr.

43 **NEW YORK DIARIST** ..... AT YOUR OWN RISK

COVER by Jeffrey Wong for THE NEW REPUBLIC. Article on page 16.

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TRB®

FROM WASHINGTON

LET THEM EAT TARTS

TRB is on vacation. This column was written by Dorothy Wickenden.

A candle-lit dinner party was held in Washington last week, catered by Ridgewell's and attended by Mayor Marion Barry and assorted members of Congress, actors, producers, TV crews, and hundreds of homeless men and women. The host was Mitch Snyder, and the occasion was the launching of the TV docudrama of his life. The event, set in the squalor of Snyder's Second Street shelter, and the filming the next day—with Martin Sheen playing Snyder and Cicely Tyson as a bag lady—were covered in titillating detail in the *Washington Post*'s Style section.

Snyder has been one of President Reagan's most nettlesome critics. He received lavish publicity for his pre-election hunger strike aimed (successfully) at forcing the administration to provide the funds it had promised to renovate the shelter, and for his recent lawsuit seeking to prevent the administration from closing the place down. But he shares the Reagan genius for turning politics into entertainment. "The people staying at the shelter," Snyder told one reporter, "will have a good time because they are not on display for their poverty and brokenness." They will be "having a good time with a lot of powerful people."

The day of the party a brief article appeared deep within the *New York Times* about a new report from one of the city's nonprofit religious coalitions, the Partnership for the Homeless. The report estimates that in 1986 between 10,000 and 12,000 new families will become homeless in New York. (The number of homeless single men and women is rising too, but somewhat less precipitately.) Exact figures about the homeless are hard to come by, but some facts are undisputed. New York City is temporarily housing at least 15,000 members of 4,000 families in its welfare hotels, shelters, and converted apartment buildings. Another thousand or so families are taken in by private agencies. Tens of thousands of people are living in overcrowded quarters with friends or relatives. They will be among the next homeless statistics. The Partnership cites reports from Boston, Newark, and New York that suggest that a year from now, the majority of the nation's homeless will be children.

Homelessness has become the social issue of the eighties. It is stylish enough to lure Hollywood to Washington. (One of the Snyder show's producers said, "There was a joke in Hollywood—'Have you been to the shelter?' ") And it is established enough to warrant routine updates in the daily papers. The peculiar politics of homelessness is embodied in the underlying fellowship between the laissez-faire Reagan administration—with its reluctance to attend to the downtrodden and the dependent—and the anarchist Christian, Mitch Snyder, with his hollow-eyed, televised pleas to give a dollar and a smile to your neighborhood street-dweller. One talks of voluntarism, the other of compassion. Both appeal to the time-honored notion of the poor and disabled as charity cases. Meanwhile, two years after they reached an agreement to repair the shelter, it is still a wreck and the fighting continues.

The politics of homelessness is also played out on the editorial and Op-Ed pages. There is now a bristling debate between conservatives who applaud Mayor Koch's order to remove people from the streets in freezing weather, and civil libertarians who tirelessly defend people's right to choose to squat outdoors rather than in shelters. The *Wall Street Journal* says that most of "the pitiful homeless," as it calls them, are deinstitutionalized mental patients who illustrate the need to broaden the standards for involuntary commitment: "Once on the streets, they make marvelous exhibits for politicians pushing new public-housing projects, but it is illness, not a lack of housing, that usually is the source of the problem." There is an obvious appeal in perceiving homelessness as a matter of patients' rights to medical attention vs. their right to self-determination. It is more manageable if it can be tagged a mental health concern or a legal affair.

The trouble with these squabbles is that they gloss over the recent tangled facts about the homeless. Countless studies reveal that since the early eighties shelters have been coping with many more than alcoholic vagrants and the mentally ill; they have been housing ever-growing numbers of evicted tenants, laid-off industrial workers, single mothers and children, unemployed and unskilled youths, teenage PCP users, victims of domestic violence, and the elderly poor. America's sprawling collection of "emergency" shelters and welfare hotels helps to answer the public's desire to keep the homeless tucked out of sight and the activists' demand that the government assume at least minimal responsibility for feeding and sheltering its citizens. It does not address the myriad causes of the crisis.

Of course homelessness is in part the product of a grotesquely skewed mental health system. (As the *Journal* points out, 70 percent of state funding for mental health goes to hospitals that care for only seven percent of the chronically ill population.) But it is also the result of decades of gentrification and mismanaged public-housing programs, two recessions, six years of Reaganomics, and the steady dissolution of family ties and social responsibility. Even the administration doesn't talk much anymore about the resilience of the safety net.

Ironically, it took the traditional charities—churches and synagogues, the Salvation Army and other private organizations—to point out that the time has come to move beyond almsgiving. The homeless represent a massive, unprecedented social breakdown. Long before most mayors had acknowledged a problem existed, these groups were setting up soup kitchens and makeshift lodgings, and insisting that it is not pity or punishment or freedom that the homeless need, but a place to live and numerous social, medical, and educational services.

What's more, they have forced sluggish governments to respond by devising brisk new kinds of public/private partnerships. New York, acknowledging that homelessness is more than a temporary crisis, has begun to heed the urgings of groups such as the Partnership for the Homeless to rehabilitate city-owned apartments as homes for the poor, to put a moratorium on the

continued on page 42

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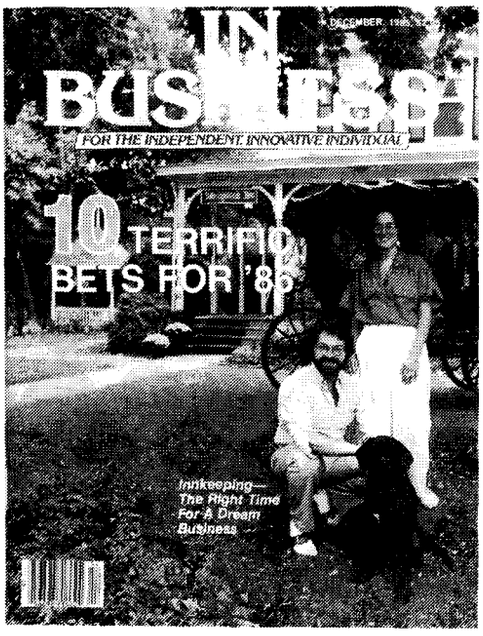
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NADER'S FAVORS

To the editors:

I have never viewed Fred Barnes as an imaginative journalist, but in his Washington Diarist ("No Saint," December 16) he tried to be one with a deplorable bit of revisionist history regarding Joseph Yablonski's campaign to unseat Tony Boyle as president of the United Mine Workers.

Before his announcement as a candidate for the union presidency, Yablonski met with me and an associate. As critics of the way the UMW was run in those years, we were sympathetic to the challenger's cause. We promised three things: to help launch his candidacy with a Washington news conference; to obtain a good labor lawyer (Joseph Rauh accepted) to handle the many matters sure to arise in such an election contest under the federal labor laws; and to find a good legal intern to work with that lawyer. We came through on all three promises.

During those months we were engaged in about a dozen projects involving consumer, environmental, and regulatory matters. There was no way we could have been involved in an extensive campaign effort over time for Mr. Yablonski. Obviously, Mr. Yablonski and his sons, involved as they were in their valiant crusade, wanted more assistance from everyone who hailed their drive. But other than an intermittent conversation and periodic reassurance, when reporters called, of the soundness of the Yablonski campaign, we were not in a position to do more. Barnes was not present when these assurances were made and was a complete outsider to the events he misreports.

RALPH NADER
Washington, D.C.

DOUBLE AGENT DOUBLE TAKE

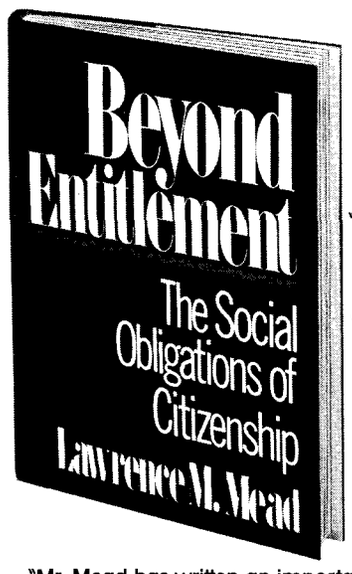
To the editors:

A few points in James Ledbetter's stunning "exposé" of Accuracy in Academia, "Campus Double Agent" (December 30), are worth a second look. Ledbetter refers to a "secret target list" of radical professors. This list is, as I told him, an open letter protesting U.S. intervention in Central America. It was compiled by the signatories themselves, and then released to the public. When a copy was sent to me, I kept it in our correspondence file. I showed it to Ledbetter because it illustrates the extent of political activity among leftist professors. None of the people criticized in our monthly newspaper is on that list.

Ledbetter doesn't mention that during this visit he showed us a course syllabus from a class he himself was taking at Yale, "Marxist Dialectic and Rhetoric." We gave it a quick look, but pointed out that it included Arthur Koestler's *The God That Failed*, and promptly dismissed Ledbetter's suggestion that the course was weighted with Marxist propaganda.

Another comical detail in Ledbetter's account has me watching *Battle for the Planet of the Apes*. In his attempt to make me look silly, I'm afraid he only shows what a dishonest man he is. When he walked in I was rewinding a recently recorded "McNeil/Lehrer" debate on AIA; every time I stopped the tape, on came the *Apes*. Ledbetter himself had expressed an interest in seeing the tape. Your investigative reporter sacrificed the truth for a laugh at our expense.

LES CSORBA III
Executive director
Accuracy in Academia
Washington, D.C.



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CLEAR ENTITLEMENT

To the editors:

Much as I appreciate Timothy Noah's thoughtful remarks about my Ronald Reagan biography ("Washington Diarist: City Slicker," January 6&13), I hope your readers realize he was being humorous when he wrote that its working title is "Blind Date with Destiny." Were any such title, working or otherwise, forced upon me, I should speedily return my publisher's advance. Even a hack has his pride!

EDMUND MORRIS
Washington, D.C.

NO EASY CUTS

To the editors:

Michael Kinsley's piece on cutting the federal budget ("Green Eyeshade Time," TRB, January 6&13) seriously

continued on page 42

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
FEBRUARY 10, 1986

TRUTHS FOR EL NORTE

When Vinicio Cerezo, the first civilian president-elect of Guatemala in 20 years, rose to deliver his inaugural address on January 14, he spoke to his country's hopes—hopes qualified by the memory of past hopes betrayed—that democracy will be restored. "We are a people who were thrown out of our house, and today we return," Cerezo said. Since these are also our hopes for Central America, we would do well to listen.

Guatemala's voices have long been strangled by terrorism, its democratic yearnings answered with murder, its cries for justice punished by torture, its simple pleas for decency left to dissipate in the silence of the *desparecidos*, the disappeared people. Over the last decade a succession of right-wing dictatorships killed thousands of Guatemalans, many of them lifelong democrats—union leaders, professors, Christian Democrats, Social Democrats, peasant cooperative leaders, schoolteachers, doctors, shopkeepers, priests, nuns—and many of them Indians and other innocents of no political conviction whatsoever.

Faced with Jimmy Carter's human rights criticisms in 1977, the Guatemalan government renounced U.S. military aid and escalated the war on democrats. When Ronald Reagan arrived in Washington in 1981, he looked more kindly upon the Guatemalans. He annually urged Congress to resume military aid, and a solid bipartisan majority annually refused.

Meanwhile, the traditional alliance between the military and the business community was coming unstuck. The officers wanted more power over the economy; the businessmen didn't like the resulting competition and corruption. A rapid succession of military coups between 1982 and 1984 left the ruling sectors exhausted and divided. Efforts to improve Guatemala's international image were perfunctory. A reduction of state violence against civilians in the cities after 1982 corresponded with an increase against Indians in the countryside. This impressed some credulous American observers, but did nothing to change the international community's view of the government's reputation for cruelty. The economy finally collapsed in 1984, capital fled, and the armed forces decided to dump the economic mess on the doorstep of the civilians. Elections were set.

Guatemala's traditional fractious right-wing parties turned out and squabbled while the Christian Democrats united behind Cerezo. A young leader (43 years old), Cerezo had risen to the top of his party after hundreds of its leaders and members were assassinated or driven into exile. He survived three assassination attempts by right-wing terrorists. A frequent visitor to Washington in the darkest days of the repression, he walked the corridors on Capitol Hill seeking out the few representatives who cared about democracy in Guatemala. At night he stayed with friends and slept on floors. Uncompromised by association with the dictatorships and bolstered by the Christian Democratic political network, he won a landslide victory.

Some Americans will now credit American foreign policy for hastening the replacement of Guatemala's military government, others will blame it for delaying democracy. But in light of our own disastrous history in Guatemala, we ought not to assume that all blessings or all curses are dispensed from El Norte. As Cerezo emphasized in a November visit to Washington, the United States ought not to assume it has all the answers for the Central American countries aspiring to democracy.

He reminded Americans, and perhaps especially liberals, not to underestimate the resilience of democratic forces in the Third World. "Many people in the world never thought the military would give power to Vinicio Cerezo," he said. While acknowledging the provocations that drove some into rebellion, he rejected the cruel and violent delusion that armed Marxism-Leninism can deliver Guatemala from its misery.

Cerezo chided Americans who think that military aid is a prerequisite for encouraging democracy in the region. It is conservatives who should pay special attention here. The Reagan administration has asked Congress to appropriate ten million dollars in military assistance next year. "We don't need it," Cerezo said bluntly. "Our military problem is not finding military aid. The problem is finding democracy." The implications for past U.S. policy in Guatemala should be clear: Reagan's requests for military aid were no help to democrats.

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Cerezo rejected the idea, popular among Americans of all political stripes, that Third World leaders should "look to the future," and let bygones be bygones. Rather, he took a cue from Raul Alfonsin in Argentina and insisted that the future of the rule of law depends on holding its past transgressors responsible. "The better way to build the future is to know what happened in the near past," he said. Cerezo does not yet have enough power to put his country's terrorists on trial for human rights abuses as Alfonsin did. Nor does he have enough power to discipline officers as Peru's Alan Garcia has done. But to assume that he never will could prove to be a self-fulfilling prophecy. The promise and power of the rule of law should never be underestimated.

The Reagan administration's coolness toward Cerezo is already apparent. Among other things, administration officials are displeased about his willingness to sit down and talk with the Sandinistas. The administration was happy to help promote the Guatemalan elections (the National Endowment for Democracy provided $500,000 for a voter education drive); it seems to be not so happy with the results. On the day of Cerezo's inauguration, President Reagan greeted another Latin president more to his liking. León Febres Cordero, a conservative and self-made millionaire who was elected the president of Ecuador last May, was hailed on the White House lawn as a model leader in the Western hemisphere and praised for resisting terrorism. The snub of Cerezo, who has personally dodged terrorist bullets, was less than subtle. (Vice President Bush attended Cerezo's inauguration, then spoke with him privately for all of ten minutes.) The lessons of this brave and eloquent democrat, it seems, will take some time to be heard in Reagan's Washington.

NOTEBOOK

□ THE HIGHLIGHT OF PRESIDENT REAGAN'S State of the Union addresses is always his parting salute to unsung American heroes. In 1982 he honored Lenny Skutnik, the man who dove into the icy Potomac River to rescue the victims of a plane crash. In 1984 he chose three men, including Sergeant Stephen Trujillo, a hero of the Grenada invasion. And last year a Harlem religious worker and a Vietnamese graduate from West Point shared the award. The president may have already made his selection for his speech on January 28, but in case he hasn't, we have a nomination: 16-year-old Michael Consalvo of Staten Island. Michael's number 43 football jersey inspired his father, Pasquale, to choose the winning combination in last week's New York lottery. According to the *New York Times*, Consalvo originally planned to play 12-14-22-32-34-44, but lowered the last digit on a whim. Michael's number won his father the $30 million jackpot. Seldom has a young man, the child of immigrant parents, contributed so materially to his family's efforts to achieve the American dream.

□ "REAGANISMS IN REVIEW," Paul Slansky's compilation of the year in Reagan quotes, got some readers waxing nostalgic for the greatest Reaganisms of all time. One that surely must be considered a leading contender was cited by Missouri Democrat Richard Gephardt last November as Congress prepared to raise the debt to two trillion dollars. On October 1, 1981, the president said, "Last night I signed a bill that raises the debt ceiling to more than one trillion dollars. The one-trillion-dollar debt figure can stand as a monument to the policies of the past that brought it about, policies, which, as of today, are reversed."

□ DEAR MISS MANNERS: We have an acquaintance (friend would be too strong a word) who is receiving bad press. George, as we call him, is one of the highest ranking officials in the State Department. Over the holidays, he attended a Washington function and ran into a conservative fellow from the Heritage Foundation who frequently badgers him in public and demands that he quit his job. Our acquaintance offered the man a frosty season's greetings and snapped, "You're the ones calling for my resignation." Well, a reporter on the scene—it was Robert Greenberger of the *Wall Street Journal*—saw this encounter and reported the whole thing. He said it proved that "constant criticism may be taking its toll," and that George was "inflicting wounds on himself." Should George have responded with more restraint? Miss Manners replies: Miss Manners does not think it wise to act like a human being at any Washington function, especially in front of a journalist. If you tell a little white lie, it could be held against you. If you tell the truth, you are sure to be punished. From now on George should do his best to act like a boring, humorless, and colorless fellow. It will do wonders for his career.

□ COULDN'T GET ELECTED DOGCATCHER DEPARTMENT: From the West Coast comes word that Walter Mondale, now a high-powered partner in the Washington law firm of Winston & Strawn, has been calling in chits with Democratic interest groups again. According to a recent *Los Angeles Times* report, the 1984 presidential nominee telephoned William Robertson, head of the Los Angeles County AFL-CIO, and L.A. Mayor Tom Bradley to lobby for the construction of a dog run in a local park. Mondale's daughter Eleanor, who lives in Los Angeles, had complained that she had nowhere to run her pet Rottweiler, Teddy, without a leash. "All I asked was that they listen to the merits of it," the elder Mondale told the *Times*. The city Parks Commission (also headed by Robertson) later recommended creation of the . . . well, you could call it a dog enterprise zone in which canine citizens are literally unleashed from annoying government regulations. And they said he had no new ideas.

□ AFTER SEVEN YEARS of sifting through the poetry of America, Robert Pinsky has announced his retirement as THE NEW REPUBLIC's poetry editor. We will mark his de-

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parture in several months—when all of the poetry he has chosen has had a chance to appear—by breaking his modest policy of not publishing his own work. He will stay on as a contributing editor. We are happy to announce Richard Howard as his successor. A distinguished poet, critic, and translator, Mr. Howard is a member of the American Institute and Academy of Arts and Letters and a former president of the PEN-American Center. In 1970 he won the Pulitzer Prize for poetry for *Untitled Subjects*, and in 1983 the American Book Award for translation. His new book of verse, *No Traveller*, will be published next fall by Atheneum. As of this week, all poetry submissions should be addressed to him.

POSTCARD CHICAGO

CRAZY EDDIES

IT'S SATURDAY MORNING, and a strange calm pervades the Chicago City Council chamber. No fists or epithets are flying. Mayor Harold Washington has booked the room for a conference on women in government, which has turned into something of a love-in. It's a setting for James Watt's worst nightmare: black women, handicapped women, Hispanic women, Asian women, Jewish women, and Native American women praise Chicago's first black mayor for his political appointments and voice their concerns. Interpreters translate the session for the hearing impaired.

One participant, who doesn't fit into any of the minority categories, rises to commend Washington. Her Northwest-side neighborhood newspaper—the kind that was arguing in 1983 that the city needed to be saved from a black mayor—has been endorsing Washington's policies lately, she says, and criticizing his arch-foe, Cook County Democratic chairman and alderman "Fast Eddie" Vrdolyak. Washington beams and offers a gracious thank-you amid polite applause. From the others in the room he expects praise. This endorsement, however, has greater significance. The tide is turning.

For the first time since his election, Washington has moved into a position of political strength. Polls show that his approval rating, which is well over 50 percent, includes a third of the city's white voters. Following a series of failed attempts to embarrass the mayor (challenging him to pass a urinalysis test, calling an aide the "funeral director of the Nazi Party" on the Council floor), Vrdolyak has seen his disapproval rating soar to 64 percent. That's a point higher than Richard Nixon's shortly before he resigned.

In the past several months, Washington has won praise from editorial writers at both major city newspapers for taking principled stands in two fights with "the 29," as the City Council majority is known here. The first was over the distribution of $127 million in federal community development block grant (CDBG) money. The Council majority delayed distribution of the grants, arguing that funds earmarked for programs such as day-care centers in poor neighborhoods should be shared with middle- and upper-middle-class wards. The 29 lost the fight, and looked foolish for ignoring an obvious point: the city was sued successfully and forced to repay the federal government for CDBG funds misused in just this way under Jane Byrne's administration.

The second skirmish concerned the mayor's proposal for a $180 million general obligation bond to pay for street and sidewalk repairs. The 29 originally opposed the bond, even though a disproportionate share of the repairs were to take place in their wards. Their reason? In the words of one alderman quoted in the *Reader*, a liberal Chicago weekly, "It would make Washington look too good."

Vrdolyak and his cohort alderman Ed Burke have attempted to block nearly all of the mayor's major initiatives, thereby creating an impression of impasse and disarray. For the first 18 months of Washington's tenure, "the Eddies" had enormous success at generating the impression that Chicago was a city that once worked, but was now "torn by racial strife." Outsiders were given to believe that Chicago would remain, as a *Wall Street Journal* writer put it, "Beirut on the lake" until the black mayor—an obvious aberration—was replaced. To bolster the Lebanese analogy, the Eddies employed terrorist tactics that would impress the PLO. Primarily, they manipulated the media, serving up prepackaged scandal stories for reporters on deadline, making extensive use of a scurrilous gossip column in the *Chicago Tribune* called "INC." "INC." is written by three reporters, one of whom, a woman named Michael Sneed, is a former Byrne press aide with close ties to Vrdolyak.

The Eddies have even taken hostages, or as the *Reader* called them, "political prisoners." The victims are more than 50 of Washington's appointees for city boards and commissions, who have been waiting as much as two years for City Council approval. Many of the slots they are to fill are empty, the previous terms having expired, or the previous commissioners having expired themselves. The 29 claim they don't object to the mayor's choices. But in truth they're terrified that the good-government types he has selected will emerge as dissenting voices in hitherto undisturbed bailiwicks of political patronage like the Chicago Park District.

AFTER the women's conference ended, I interviewed Washington about his first term. I originally met the mayor through my mother, who, as the city's director of special events, organizes Chicago's parades and festivals. I got to know him better at the 1984 Democratic Convention in San Francisco, where I accompanied him as an alternate on a slate of mostly black favorite son delegates. For Washington, the convention was a fiasco; he went to San Francisco to tell the Democrats about urban problems,

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and was tripped up at every turn by mysterious tricks. Invitations appeared for a mayoral reception that didn't exist. Washington was also embarrassed, harassed, and finally criticized by black newspapers like the *Chicago Defender* and *Chicago Metro News*. The only national attention the mayor got was for yelling at CBS reporter Ed Bradley, who was trying to move him into a confrontation with Vrdolyak on the convention floor. Washington saw this as an egregious example of the media elevating the opposition alderman to the status of anti-mayor, a tactic which continues to infuriate him.

If Washington's public image hit rock bottom that summer, it began to soar the following spring, when a plot against him backfired. A black sewer worker named James Burrell, who was running against a candidate backed by the mayor in a special aldermanic election, claimed he had a tape of the mayor trying to buy him out of the race. Through Vrdolyak henchman Joe Novak, the *Chicago Tribune* obtained a copy of the illegally made tape and printed a front-page story suggesting that the mayor was guilty of impropriety, if not illegality. The paper went with the story even though, as the editor, Jim Squires, later told Anthony Lukas, white *Tribune* reporters hadn't yet been able to transcribe the tape because of their difficulty understanding black English.

The full transcript, finally printed by the *Tribune*, supported none of the allegations. Burrell failed to cajole Washington into a threat or a bribe. "The taping turned the tide with the public," Washington told me. "When the whole tape was run people were shocked. What they heard was all this reform stuff—not bossism. In an off-guard moment, there it was. People said this cat's not playing games."

THE TURNABOUT came late because Washington only recently began fighting back. He missed dozens of opportunities to correct disinformation. One much-discussed example was the Seaway scandal, an inaccurate story about city money being placed in non-interest-bearing accounts in banks run by Washington cronies. Rather than responding with evidence that would refute the charge, or giving the press tips about potential scandals involving his opponents, Washington made the Nixonian mistake of lashing out at reporters, accusing them of cultural bias and "institutional racism."

He hasn't changed his mind about the media. "The press has done more to hurt this city than Vrdolyak has," he said. "They will not analyze. They don't understand how I got here. They perpetuate and overdramatize this fight." Washington's criticisms finally started to make the media more wary about unsubstantiated allegations like the Seaway story. Joe Novak, who probably planted it, has had to start his own newsletter, *Majority Report*, since the papers now look at his tips with a critical eye. And Washington's press secretary, Alton Miller, has been circulating "STINC.," a rejoinder to the innuendo that fills "INC."

Reporters have tended to dwell on racial antagonism as the root of Chicago's conflict, partly because of the viciousness that came to the surface in the 1983 election. Washington didn't help the situation by telling black crowds, "It's our turn." This gave some white voters the impression that Washington too supported the spoils system, and merely wanted a slice for black party hacks. And this helped the terrorists, who use race hatred as camouflage for what really matters to them—politics. The Eddies don't particularly enjoy being called bigots, and only play on voters' racial fears to preserve the political power of the machine. Although Vrdolyak uttered racist remarks during the campaign, he would be delighted to support a black candidate, if he or she would toe the machine line and restore the balance of power that existed before 1983.

The mayor claims that patronage is now "pretty much destroyed." And because of a recent court decision called the Shakman decree, which bans politically motivated hiring and firing for most city jobs, it is unlikely that any mayor will ever exercise the power that Daley did. But it does look as if Washington is on the brink of gaining a majority of the City Council, which could mean finally eliminating the impression that Chicago is stagnating. Recent court decisions have overturned Jane Byrne's blatantly gerrymandered ward map, and upheld a more equitable redrawn version. Special elections will be held in seven mostly black and Hispanic wards in March. If Washington allies win four of those contests, the Council will be split 25 to 25, and he casts the tie-breaking vote. That might just make the guerrillas take to the hills.

JACOB WEISBERG

Arab hypocrisy in South Africa.

APARTHEID'S OIL

IN 1983 Saudi Arabian delegates to the United Nations General Assembly voted for a complete embargo of oil shipments to South Africa. But at the same time they were denouncing international trade with the apartheid regime, the Saudis were exporting oil to South Africa. Saudi Arabia, along with the Sultanate of Oman and a number of other Arab states, has become one of Pretoria's primary sources of crude oil.

This commerce is, of course, a closely guarded secret. Wherever leftist and Third World audiences congregate, the Arabs depict themselves as untainted by contact with the apartheid state, while Israel is portrayed as South Africa's only partner in the Middle East. The political gains derived from this image have been enormous: black and white liberals in the United States see Israel in a negative light. Supporters of Israel are constantly on the defensive, and the Arabs have become endeared to the antiapartheid movement.

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The South Africans are just as secretive about the oil trade as the Arabs are. A steady supply of oil is critical for the government's police force and army, the enforcers of apartheid. Revealing information about the Republic's oil procurement is punishable by up to seven years in prison.

Despite an OPEC boycott since 1973, South Africa has always found willing suppliers of crude oil, whether they be open about it, as was the shah of Iran, or clandestine, as are the Arabs. The oil trade means close to five billion dollars a year shared by Third World exporters and Western oil traders and shippers. Of this amount, two billion dollars are from surcharges and premium payments derived from the clandestine nature of the trade.

For example, on August 18, 1980, a Dutch oil trader named John Deuss contracted to resell the South Africans 12 million metric tons of Saudi crude over a three-year period, for approximately $3.5 billion. The Saudis, referred to in a confidential South African government report by the code name "Z people," were actively involved in the deal. The report, first exposed by the Dutch weekly *Vrij Nederland* in April 1985, has finally been made available in the United States. The report reveals that the Saudis knew all along that Deuss was reselling their oil to South Africa. It depicted the Saudis as tough bargainers eager to pocket as much money as possible from the deal, while at the same time insisting that "these transactions be kept absolutely secret."

Deuss's 1980-83 Saudi transaction was not his first in the South African oil trade. Early in 1980 he set up a three-year contract to resell the South Africans 44 million barrels of Omani crude. The Omani deal, first revealed in May 1985 in the London *Observer*, was arranged by Dr. Omar Zawawi, an adviser to Sultan Qaboos ibn Said. Dr. Zawawi is considered by some to be the brains, if not the power, behind the throne. At the time the contract was signed, Zawawi's brother was Oman's foreign minister. Maurice Sellier, a British attorney who was once involved in the deal, states that Zawawi was fully aware that the oil was destined for South Africa. "We discussed it [the South African connection] many times. Everybody knew about it."

THE Shipping Research Bureau, a privately funded antiapartheid group in Amsterdam, monitors South Africa's oil trade worldwide. The bureau to date has produced several reports detailing hundreds of probable deliveries of crude oil to South Africa in the last five years. The bureau's records show that of the total shipments of crude oil to South Africa from all points in the world, an ever-increasing percentage of those shipments originate in the Persian Gulf. The bureau's latest full report, issued in June 1984, showed that in 1982 Persian Gulf sources accounted for approximately 86 percent of all monitored oil shipments to South Africa. The bureau nevertheless concentrates its criticism on the Western states in which the oil traders and shippers are based, and carefully avoids speculation about Arab intentions.

The Arabs themselves insist that oil-exporting states have no control over what happens to the oil once it leaves port. However, the truth is that since 1980 each exporting state has been fully apprised of the names of the Western oil traders who resell Arab oil to South Africa and the names of the Western tanker companies that transport the oil.

Partly in reaction to the bureau's first report, Arab oil countries approved a resolution in 1981 calling for tanker captains to produce official papers showing the ports at which their carriers had been anchored during the past year. Any carrier or oil company caught breaking the South African oil embargo would face blacklisting. The resolution looked good on paper and won its authors kudos at the International Conference on Sanctions Against South Africa held the following month, but none of its points has ever been put into effect.

The trade goes on. A meeting of nonaligned nations in Kuwait in April 1982 condemned Israeli-South African ties. While the rhetoric rang, the Norwegian supertanker *Thorsholm* sat anchored off the United Arab Emirate port of Fujairah. Before the month was up, the *Thorsholm* left the Emirates with nearly 280,000 metric tons of crude oil for the Republic of South Africa. Between July 1982 and September 1984, the *Thorsholm* made at least six additional calls in South Africa with deliveries of Arab oil. The shipping industry's official log of ocean voyages suggests that the *Thorsholm* continued to carry oil to South Africa well into 1985, a time when the apartheid government needed all the help it could get.

ROBERT WHITEHILL

Robert Whitehill is a Washington attorney and freelance writer.

The super Southern primary of 1988.

FRONT WINDOW

AS AN EXAMPLE of regulative zeal run wild and the mischief it can do, it is hard to improve on the new rules for presidential primaries in 1988, instituted by the Democrats and imposed, inadvertently, on the Republicans.

Before 1980 the 50 states and a handful of other local entities held their primaries and caucuses when it suited them, within the year of the election and a reasonable time before the national convention. From this permissive arrangement emerged a delegate-selection calendar with a pretty fair mix of states at each stage: big and little, industrial and rural, North, South, East, and West, with nicely placed intervals between the more important clusters.

However, some people were bothered by the fact that a handful of states, notably New Hampshire and Iowa, kept

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holding their primaries or caucuses before the rest of the country. Those states got more attention from the candidates and consequently from the news media. So the Democratic Party's rule-makers made a rule: Democrats can't hold primaries or caucuses before the second Tuesday in March, which came to be called the window. But an exception was made for a half-dozen states in 1980, because Jimmy Carter wanted it. In 1984 there was an exception for Iowa and New Hampshire, because Fritz Mondale (with Ted Kennedy's acquiescence) favored it. And that exception is now in place for 1988, because nobody wanted another fight over it. In other words, what the window was designed to put an end to—namely the special place of Iowa and New Hampshire—it has never done and apparently never will do.

Instead the Democratic window did something else. By establishing an official opening day for most states, it created a single target for other states that wanted to move forward. And, goaded each presidential year by candidates with local clout, that is exactly what a huge number have done.

IN 1976, before there was a window, there was one primary (Florida) on the second Tuesday in March, one on the third Tuesday (Illinois), and only a couple of minor caucuses in between. In 1980, to make sure Ted Kennedy got a bashing early in the campaign, Jimmy Carter got two more Southern states to hold primaries on the second Tuesday in March and three more to hold caucuses the same week. With a couple of other states moving up to the window on their own, there were now three times as many primaries and caucuses as before in the first eight days of the window. That solid wall of Southern primaries and caucuses, incidentally, did exactly what it was supposed to do to Kennedy—buried him.

As 1984 approached, Walter Mondale took a look at the seven Southern events in the first week of the window, worried about John Glenn making hay in them, and got his friends in Rhode Island and Michigan to move up. With some other states just drifting in on their own, there were now 16 states, as well as Puerto Rico, deciding over a third of all the elected delegates in that eight-day period.

Thus was born "front-loading"—the newest evil troubling the Democratic rule-makers. And more is coming. Last month a Southern Legislative Conference voted unanimously for what is being loosely referred to as a 1988 Southern Regional primary in the first week of the Democratic window. The conference is a bipartisan but mostly Democratic body representing the 13 states generally thought of as the South, along with Maryland and West Virginia. The resolution actually called for either a primary or caucuses.

Seven of the 13 Southern states, of course, were scheduled in the opening week last time, and the biggest state still outside, Texas, is set to make the move at the next session of its legislature. It is hard to predict how many of the remaining states will join these eight. What is clear is that Texas will be added to the three Southern primaries on Super Tuesday, March 8, 1988, as well as perhaps one or two others. Virginia, whose ambitious retiring governor, Chuck Robb, likes the idea, will almost certainly get its caucuses added to the existing bloc, and other caucus-holding Southern Democratic parties may do the same. It requires no legislative action, no public money, to move caucuses.

Now that the South will not have a Kennedy to kick around, the Democrat least likely to welcome a Dixie-dominated Super Tuesday is the New York governor, Mario Cuomo. Just who would be helped, aside from the Southern contender, or contenders, likely to appear, is yet to be determined. Jesse Jackson probably would not mind it at all—nearly half of his 1984 delegates were won in the South.

It's by no means certain, though, that Southern states will be the only new faces in that opening week of the window. There is already speculation about which big, relatively liberal Northern states might be coaxed up to the rim of the window—to offset the "front load" from Dixie. Connecticut, New York, even California are some of the names you hear.

The result, of course, could be what some people are now referring to as a de facto national primary, with most of the 1988 Democratic delegates being chosen within barely a week of the window. In short, what began as a rule to bring New Hampshire and Iowa in line may wind up creating a national primary—which most party politicians, in principle, oppose.

Meanwhile, in the other party, there is currently no window. But as states change their Democratic primary dates, the Republican primaries are changed too. There will be a front-loaded Republican as well as Democratic calendar in 1988—with all those heavy Southern primaries up there on Super Tuesday for George Bush, Bob Dole, and Jack Kemp as well as for Gary Hart, Cuomo, and Joseph Biden.

On the whole, the vice president's strategists are fairly comfortable, and Kemp's are wary. Kempites, who see themselves starting behind and needing to build credibility with early wins, do not fancy a further-enhanced Super Tuesday early in the season—quite apart from the regions involved. Bushites are glad to see Texas moving up front. The vice president has looked after his home state, where he almost beat Reagan in the 1980 primary, and is fairly confident of defeating a divided field in 1988. Bush people also feel good about the South in general just now—where they are counting on Pat Robertson to sap Kemp's support on the right—and there is little on the vice president's left to make him vulnerable to anybody else. As for front-loading in general, the view in the Bush camp is: the more the better. They will have the money, the organization, the network of party friends everywhere to run in 20 states at once. Sound familiar? Like so much about Bush strategy today, you heard it once from Walter Mondale.

MARTIN PLISSNER

Martin Plissner is executive political editor of CBS News.

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The hidden cost of divorce.

BARTER IN THE COURT

IF CURRENT TRENDS continue, over half of the marriages formed in the 1980s will end in divorce. Despite the grim statistics, couples continue to marry and have children, hoping that they will beat the odds. A critical point that often eludes us is that when a couple doesn't beat the odds, the loss is not wholly a private one. Many of the costs of a divorced family's shattered lives are paid by society.

When a marriage breaks up, both the family and society become poorer because economies of scale are lost. Somebody has to pay for two houses or apartments instead of one, as well as the duplication of appliances, automobiles, and insurance. Basic utility costs, such as for cooking, heating, hot water, and local telephone service, are almost doubled when households divide. Furthermore, because medical insurance and pensions are family fringe benefits more often associated with male than female jobs, divorce confounds our mechanisms to protect people against illness and the quiet onslaught of age.

Among upper-income couples, the economic burden of divorce is generally borne by the family. But in families of average income or less, the burden of divorce-related poverty falls on society as a whole. Welfare payments, subsidized housing, public sector make-work jobs, and salaries for lawyers who collect support for women and children are but a few of the mounting costs we pay for other people's divorces. Thirty-four percent of all previously married female heads of household are on welfare, while less than two percent of married women from similar backgrounds are on welfare.

Our complex divorce laws only exacerbate these problems. Traditional divorce law was the product of a society-wide consensus with strong religious roots that condemned divorce. Because divorce was condemned, the person who caused it was punished. Today's law tends to be less concerned with measuring fault. It looks to the economic needs of the parties in establishing alimony and to respective "parenting" abilities in awarding child custody. Since neither a fault-based system nor the new no-fault system satisfactorily handles all domestic matters, in most places a divorce can be brought under either set of rules.

One reason a fault-based system of divorce is still alive and well is that couples often want courts to decide who was cruel to whom, whose infidelity was more culpable, and who is a better parent. They also often want financial awards and custody decisions to serve as a tax for past slights or indiscretions. An additional complication is that judges apply fault principles to no-fault divorces and apply no-fault principles to fault-based divorces. The system presents endless opportunities for mischief, particularly against women and children.

Although very few divorce cases ever get to court—nationwide, 92 percent of all divorces are settled by the parties with no courtroom encounter—divorce decrees are typically drafted by the lawyers for the parties after private compromise. These compromises are then approved by the judge. In this bargaining, women's desire to keep their children puts them at a distinct disadvantage. Mothers who wish to get custody of their children without a fight are routinely forced to sacrifice necessary financial support. This distasteful form of barter is one of the reasons that single women with dependent children are becoming a new class of the poverty-stricken.

I know how divorce laws' unpredictability can be used to terrorize women into bartering away their support because I've done it. I had a client, a railroad brakeman, who had fallen out of love with his wife and in love with motorcycles. Along the way he had picked up a new woman who was as taken with motorcycles as he. After about a year of competing with fast bikes and fast women, my client's wife filed for divorce. My client had two children at home—one about nine and the other about 12. Unfortunately for him, the judge in the county where his wife had filed for divorce was notorious for giving high alimony and child-support awards. The last thing that I wanted to do was go to trial. The wife had a strong case of adultery, and the best defense my client could manufacture was a lame countersuit for "cruel and inhuman treatment"—not exactly a showstopper in a rural domestic court 14 years ago.

During the initial interview I asked my client about his children, and he told me that he got along with them well. Then I asked whether he wanted custody. He emphatically said no. Nonetheless, it occurred to me that if he told his wife that he would fight for custody all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, we might settle the whole divorce fairly cheaply. That night he went home and began a guerrilla campaign centering on the children. His likelihood of getting custody from the judge was negligible, but that did not discourage our blustering threats.

As I had hoped, my client's wife was unwilling to take any chance of losing her children, and the divorce was settled exactly as I wanted. The wife got the children by agreement, but very modest alimony and child support. All we had needed to defeat her legitimate claims in the settlement process was a halfway credible threat of a protracted custody battle.

THIRTY YEARS AGO most states indulged a maternal presumption that guaranteed a blameless wife custody of young children. Even under the old system, however, courts were willing to find women "unfit" parents when their conduct—particularly sexual adventure—was the cause of the marriage's breakup. In the face of demands for sexual equality, long-standing legal presumptions in favor of maternal custody have been eroding. Only six states still indulge a strong maternal presumption; and 21 states allow no presumption. The rest (except West Virginia) indulge a weak maternal presumption that can be used as a tiebreaker.

On the face of it, the new sex-neutral approach makes

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eminently good sense because there are fathers who are surpassingly desirable parents and mothers who would eat their young. Fathers, reasonably enough, are now demanding that courts award custody based on an individual inquiry into the parent-child relationships in their particular families. Unfortunately, a great deal of sinister bargaining is carried on in the shadows of the system. In the end, women come out of divorce settlements under our purportedly sex-neutral system with the worst of all worlds: they get the children but no money with which to support them.

Little attention has been given to the effect of in-court rules on out-of-court bargaining, largely because our views about divorce are informed by wishful thinking. Most of us begin with a political conviction that women *ought* to be equal to men economically, and then leap to a conclusion that they *are*. It then logically follows that women can support children as well as men and that whoever wants the children can pay for them.

The fact is that women are much poorer than men, and this pattern appears highly resistant to change. The mean wage for women who work full time is 59 percent of the mean wage for men. Once a man and woman are married, if both are working full time, the woman's wage on average amounts to 34.7 percent of the family's earnings. Furthermore, the evidence indicates that occupational segregation of women in low-paying jobs is increasing rather than decreasing. In 1950, 62 percent of all clerical workers were women. By 1978, the percentage had risen to 79 percent.

The cost of child care in terms of lost working time is a major part of the economic burden placed on single mothers. For example, previously married females without children average 35.6 weeks of work a year; previously married females with children average only 28.3 weeks. Once children are old enough to care for themselves, the economic performance of households headed by a previously married female improves significantly. Only 14 percent of all child welfare payments go to families where all children are over 12.

THERE ARE other reasons to distrust a system that puts custody awards up for grabs. Students of family relations, such as the famous lawyer/psychoanalyst team of Joseph Goldstein, Anna Freud, and Albert Solnit, have found that custody decisions must be made quickly. They conclude that constant hassles over custody undermine a child's fragile sense of security, and that once a child is placed in one environment he or she should not be moved to another. And from the point of view of the child's best interest—supposedly the legal standard—differences in relative parenting ability are not nearly as important as both the speed and permanence of custody arrangements. The current system for handling child-related matters, involving years of possible litigation, produces results that scientists consider harmful to the child.

Typically custody battles proceed through the courts at a glacial pace. Parents may spend as long as two years competing for children's affections, and often brainwashing them by excoriating the other spouse. Bribery can take the form of unreasonably large allowances, relaxation of discipline, and indulgence of outrageous childish whims. The parent with whom the children are living during the litigation will have an advantage in this brainwashing. Grandparents, other relatives, and friends can also contribute.

MOST of the problems of child custody litigation—starting with the settlement trade-off between children and money, and ending with the psychological damage of a courtroom showdown—can be avoided by not litigating child custody. This is the justification for the old, strong maternal presumption and its new sex-neutral reincarnation: the primary caretaker parent rule. It works well; sadly, however, the rule is unique to West Virginia law.

In most families, even where both parents work, one parent is almost always primarily responsible for caring for the children. That person is the "primary caretaker parent," and in West Virginia he or she automatically gets custody of very young children if he or she is a "fit parent." There is no behind-the-scenes bargaining, no public badmouthing. We do not try to measure relative degrees of ability between parents, nor do we evaluate a primary caretaker's "morality" unless the conduct directly affects the health or safety of the child. Children over 14, who have many of the attributes of adults, are allowed to select the parent with whom they wish to live if that parent is "fit." This rule about older children inevitably leads to some competitive bribery, but it is almost impossible to force a near-adult to live where he or she does not want to live.

The "primary caretaker parent" is defined as the parent who: (1) prepares the food; (2) changes the diapers, dresses and bathes the child; (3) takes the child to school, church, and other activities; (4) makes appointments with a doctor and generally watches over the child's health; and (5) interacts with the child's friends, the school authorities, and other adults engaged in activities that involve the child. It is not surprising that the "primary caretaker" is usually the mother, but that need not be the case.

The difference between this system and the one in many other states is that the litigants cannot demand that the children testify. Determining which parent is the primary caretaker can be done with lay testimony, and without the use of any expert witnesses. This eliminates competitive bribery of the children and emotional damage when the children are used in a duel between the parents. Once a child is six years old or older, a judge may ask the child which parent he would like to live with, and give that testimony such weight as the judge believes it is entitled to. However, the judge may refuse to take children's testimony if he or she suspects competitive bribery or brainwashing. At the same time, this narrow exception to the primary caretaker rule allows individualized treatment in the few cases where relying on statistical averages will produce outrageous results.

If all of this sounds terribly cold-blooded, it must be

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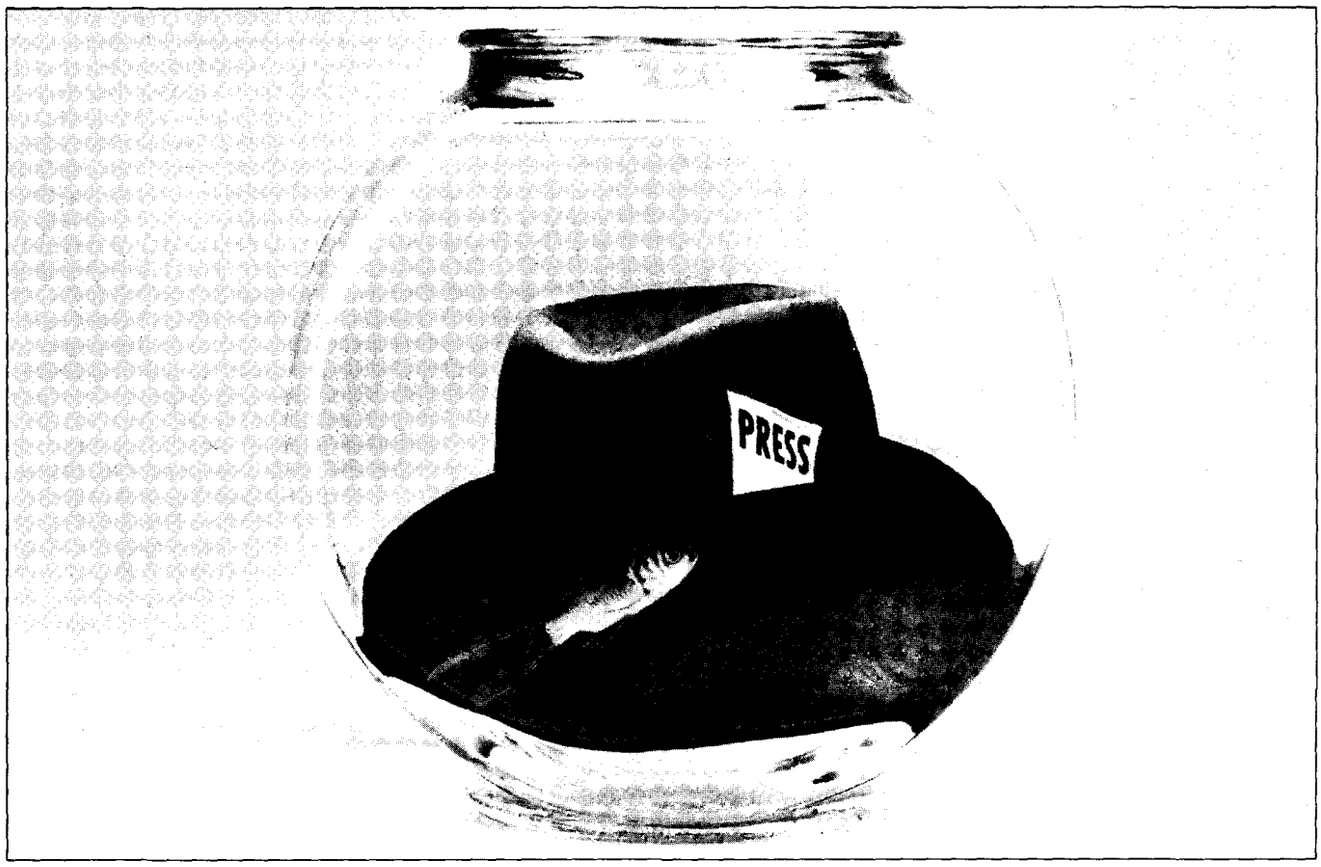

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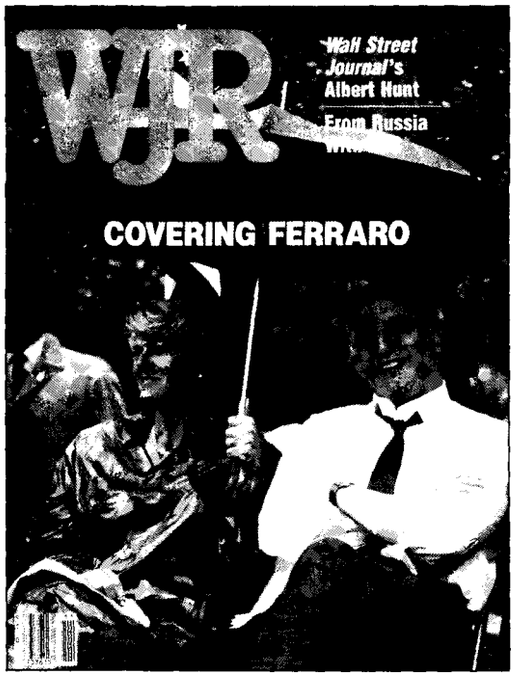

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remembered that nobody goes to court until a significant loss has already occurred. A criminal court, for example, may convict a murderer, but it cannot bring the victim back to life. Similarly, in domestic cases courts can divide marital property, award alimony and child support, and determine custody. But a domestic court can't do what's really important—get both spouses high-paying jobs to offset divorce-related poverty, and provide children with the love and money of a two-parent home.

The individualized approach to custody decisions, which encourages exhaustive hearings, inevitably has one or all of the following effects: (1) trades of money for children; (2) competitive expenditures to hire experts, giving the apparent advantage to the richer party; (3) bribery of children; (4) insecurity for children because the process is protracted and the outcome uncertain; (5) emotional wounds from experts, lawyers, and courts trying to determine psychological compatibility; and (6) brainwashing of children.

The advantage of the primary caretaker parent rule is that a lawyer can advise the primary caretaker that there is no chance of his or her losing custody in court—thus no distortion in settlement concerning alimony, support, and property division. Furthermore, custody can be decided in a matter of hours, which means stability and security for the children. The parent who is not the primary caretaker is guaranteed liberal visitation rights.

The nationwide debate on child custody, including the arguments for joint custody and a greater role for fathers, demonstrates just how acutely many men feel the loss of their children. Nevertheless, the grim statistics on the growing numbers of destitute female-headed households demand that we begin thinking of divorce less in terms of individual emotions and more in terms of broad economic patterns. No approach will entirely satisfy the litigants, and trying to do so has cost us dearly.

RICHARD NEELY

Richard Neely is a justice of the West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals, and author of *The Divorce Decision* (McGraw-Hill).

Win or lose, Marcos is in trouble.

THE SHAKING OF A PRESIDENT

BY FRED BARNES

Manila

THERE'S ONLY so much that the aides at Malacanang Palace can do to make President Ferdinand Marcos look good on American TV. The setting they chose for a 30-minute Q&A on Cable News Network a month before the February 7 presidential election in the Philippines was the palace's Music Room, a gaudy suite filled with autographed pictures of world leaders, mostly Americans. One is inscribed: "Barbara and I were proud to attend your inauguration [on] June 30, 1981. With respect and high regard. George Bush." Marcos's chair was placed in front of a potted plant draped with two dozen pearl necklaces. And he wore a dress shirt, not one of the baggy sports shirts that he favors for campaign appearances.

Still, Marcos looked old, sick, and desperate. His face was puffy, like a boxer who has taken too many drubbings. After sitting down, he summoned an aide and asked for a pillow. During the interview, he answered the questions forcefully enough, but his eyes watered so much he had to dab them dry several times. The TV chat completed, he anxiously asked his aides if he'd mentioned two points aimed at persuading the American audience that he wants a fair and honest election. Then he went into his adjacent office for an untelevised interview. This time, a pillow was waiting on his chair.

Yes, the man has troubles. A lot has happened since Marcos won the presidency in 1965, most of it disastrous. Two decades ago the Philippines had a bustling economy, the strongest in Asia after Japan's. Now the country is an economic backwater. Its GNP fell six percent in 1984 and another four percent last year. The standard of living has dropped 30 percent. Investment capital has fled. And the business community has given up on Marcos, throwing its support in the presidential race to Corazon (Cory) Aquino, the widow of Marcos's slain foe, Benigno S. (Ninoy) Aquino. Asked what Marcos could do now to revive business support, Jaime V. Ongpin said, "Nothing. It's too late. We've had 20 years of this guy and his promises of reform and more reform that he never institutes. His credibility is gone." Ongpin is president of Benguet Corporation, a mining concern listed on the New York Stock Exchange. His brother Roberto is the chief economics minister in the Marcos government.

The economy isn't the half of it. The killing of Aquino in August 1983 at Manila International Airport after three

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years of exile in the United States touched off a political crisis. Marcos claims to this day that Communists were behind the killing, but a special commission implicated military officers close to him and his wife, Imelda. General Fabian Ver, the army chief of staff and a former Marcos bodyguard, and 25 other officers were charged with the murder, only to be acquitted last December. The assassination and a growing Communist insurgency by the New Peoples Army soured the Reagan administration on Marcos. Official after official dropped by Malacanang Palace last year to scold the president. Marcos promised to reform, but did nothing, if only because he figured it was only the bureaucrats, not President Reagan himself, who were angry. Then the State Department concocted a visit in October by Reagan's close friend Senator Paul Laxalt. This chastened Marcos. In November he boldly decided to hold a snap election, partly to satisfy Reagan, partly in search of a new mandate to quiet his noisy foes at home. Twenty-seven million Filipinos, out of a population of 55 million, are expected to vote on February 7.

Marcos hasn't faced a serious campaign fight since 1965, and after calling the election he was caught off guard by two developments. First, the Philippine Supreme Court did *not* declare the election unconstitutional. If it had, Marcos would have gotten credit for his willingness to go before the voters without actually having to go before them. Second, the political opposition, which had been fragmented for years, united. Marcos had not anticipated either the lasting reaction to the Aquino assassination or the emergence of Cory Aquino as a political leader.

NEVERTHELESS, Marcos can't be counted out yet. Cory Aquino is wildly popular, but she lacks the political experience and cunning that both Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos have in rich excess. She has unwittingly handed Marcos a series of issues on which he has anchored his whole campaign: communism, secession, and inexperience. This has enabled him to avoid the issue of his own tarnished record.

Shortly after Aquino agreed to run on a ticket with Salvador (Doy) Laurel as her vice presidential candidate, she announced that she would welcome Communists into a coalition government if they renounced violence and ran for election. Marcos leaped at this. "Be conscious that the elections represent a choice between our peace and the dangers of Communist takeover," he told a rally at Naga City. In every speech he raises the specter of a bloodbath like that in Indonesia in 1965 after Communists got a toehold in the government. The death toll was 700,000 to one million, he said, and "we cannot allow a similar experience to engulf this nation." This may be demagoguery, but even Aquino's allies concede that it has worked.

The secession issue has been almost as successful. It involves a Moslem separatist group, the Moro Nationalist Liberation Front, which is active in the southern islands of the Philippines. While Ninoy Aquino was in exile in 1981, he met with Nur Misuari, the MNLF leader. That wasn't the stuff of a great issue for Marcos, but a recent meeting in Madrid between Ninoy's brother, Agipito (Butz) Aquino, and Misuari was. Marcos charges that the Aquino brothers agreed to a deal creating a separate Moslem state. Butz and Cory Aquino deny it and insist they oppose secession, but Marcos is undeterred. "This is treason, a sellout," he said in Naga City. "This is dismemberment of the Republic of the Philippines, [and] anyone who proposes dismemberment of the Republic represents a danger to our country."

To play on Cory Aquino's inexperience, the Marcos forces emblazon the phrase "*Subok sa Krisis*" on streamers. That's Tagalog, the national language, for "tested in crisis." They joke that Aquino is "*Subok sa Mrs.*" Or "tested in housewifery." Marcos sneers at Aquino for having no specific program, though she is fast cobbling one together. He refused to debate her on national television on the ground that there's nothing to debate. His campaign also circulates copies of a *New York Times* interview in which Aquino could remember only one of the two issues that she and Laurel, her running mate, differ on. And at one point Marcos said he was embarrassed to be running against a woman with no background in politics.

But Aquino's inexperience may be less of a handicap to her than Marcos's ill health is to him. He has to be carried to the podium for some of his speeches. He wobbles when he walks (he blames an old war injury) and clutches the railing for dear life when he boards or leaves the presidential jet. American officials are persuaded that Marcos suffers from systemic lupus erythematosus, a recurring sickness that attacks the cell structure and various organs. In his case, the kidneys have been attacked, and he's believed to have had a kidney transplant. The facial puffiness is supposedly caused by the anti-rejection drug he takes. As he sat on the stage at a rally in Legazpi recently, an aide applied medicine to the back of Marcos's left hand. He winced in pain. Marcos told me later that a woman had scratched him while he worked his way through the crowd. Two days later, his hand was bleeding when he campaigned in Dagupan City. Aides used the same explanation. Others suspect the needles from dialysis treatment are causing the problem.

It begins to sound like President Richard Nixon during the last days of Watergate. In fact, the Marcos campaign is encouraging the Nixon analogy. An advertising agency in Manila came up with a slogan for the campaign that appears on billboards, bumper stickers, and posters—"Now More Than Ever," Nixon's campaign theme in 1972. A Washington political consultant gave Nixon a Marcos bumper sticker with the slogan, and Nixon said he hopes it produces a landslide for Marcos as it did for him. And crowds at Marcos rallies chant another slogan: "*Marcos pa rin.*" Roughly translated, that means "Marcos's the one."

FOR the wealthy elite that dominates the Philippines, politics and government are a family affair. The chief advance man for the Marcos campaign is 28-year-old Ferdinand (Bong-Bong) Marcos Jr., who is also a provincial

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governor. Marcos's daughter, Imee, a member of Parliament, has a heavy stump schedule. His brother-in-law, Benjamin (Kokoy) Romualdez, a top campaign strategist, is ambassador to Washington, a provincial governor, and a member of Parliament. But one family member, the minister of human settlements, is more senior than the rest. That is Imelda R. Marcos, 56, the first lady, or F.L., as she is called in newspaper headlines here.

With unbridled nepotism the common practice, it's not surprising that Mrs. Marcos might see herself as an ideal vice presidential running mate for her husband. Naturally she denies it, maintaining she has no desire to succeed her husband in office. "I am coterminous with my husband," she says. In any case, although she wasn't picked, she is credited with anointing 75-year-old Arturo Tolentino as the vice presidential candidate. Tolentino, fired only last year as Marcos's foreign minister, has no political base and is too old to be taken seriously as a permanent successor to Marcos. This means that if Marcos dies, Tolentino would step in, but the ultimate successor could still be Mrs. Marcos, her brother, Kokoy, or someone beholden to her.

The selling of Tolentino is often hilarious. In his speeches, Tolentino dwells on his latest physical exam, quoting the doctor as saying he has the body of a 45-year-old. Marcos's defense is that Tolentino is "the one man" able to hit the ground running if he took over the presidency. Roberto Ongpin, the economics minister, says in Tolentino's behalf that he "has four girlfriends and doesn't have an ounce of fat." But Jaime Ongpin, the businessman who backs Aquino, has a better explanation. Tolentino's nickname, he says, is Jukebox. "You put the money in and you get the tune you want."

AT RALLIES, Tolentino defers to Mrs. Marcos. He warms up the crowd for her, but she doesn't need much. Despite her dragon lady image, Mrs. Marcos has political magnetism. She brings with her a hand microphone and a piano player (he doubles as a bodyguard), and she invariably sings at rallies. Crowds love it. At a dinner a month before election day, she performed three songs for Senator Phil Gramm of Texas. One was "Deep in the Heart of Texas." Sometimes she croons to her husband, sometimes they sing duets. Marcos, several inches shorter, appears to like everything she does. "She is a very intelligent woman," he said. "She happens to be a little better looking than others." He inscribed a picture to her this way: "To Imelda, my love. No matter how dark the night, how dreary the day, however heavy the burdens of state and depressing the ways of friends, my soul lifts, my heart soars, and my face lights up at just a glimpse of you."

Mrs. Marcos refers to her husband as "Marcos" and imagines herself an equal partner. She brings geographic balance, since he's from the northwest, she from the southeast. Her view is that Communist nations to the west—China, the Soviet Union, Vietnam—are hers to deal with. This leaves the United States and other democratic countries to her husband. Mrs. Marcos likes the idea of a dominant "umbrella" party in the Philippines, namely the Marcos party, the KBL. Other parties would remain weak. All of this may be a conceit, but Mrs. Marcos is dead serious about it.

She is savvy and enormously energetic, sleeping two or three hours a night and often conferring with advisers until dawn. She once dined with a Washington operative, then talked business with him from 5 a.m. to 7 a.m. But there are political costs to Mrs. Marcos's role as what her husband calls "not a power but an influence." She and her brother are opposed to reforms—ending "crony capitalism," cleaning out the deadwood in the military, etc.—that would improve Marcos's image. Moreover, she is identified with the "hidden wealth" that the Marcos family has accumulated in office, with the corruption that is endemic in the Philippines, and with projects—a culture center, a film center—that cost much and provide little.

CORY AQUINO, 52 years old, also comes from the educated, affluent elite, but there the similarities with Mrs. Marcos end. Mrs. Aquino is short, a bland speaker, and never overbearing or flamboyant. Mrs. Marcos has sneered at her for not wearing makeup. Yet she has an odd kind of charisma that grew out of the stoicism she displayed after her husband's murder and the moral status she achieved from his martyrdom. In Tagum, a primitive rural town in Mindanao, a crowd of 10,000 waited in the rain for six hours for her in mid-January. When she appeared, the audience went berserk, cheering wildly during her ten-minute speech, though it had no applause lines. Her crowds, unlike Marcos's, are routinely enthusiastic. While Marcos spoke in Legazpi, the party functionary sitting next to me, six feet from Marcos, dozed. No one sleeps at an Aquino rally. Her speeches are rarely programmatic. She dubs Marcos "the number one suspect" in her husband's slaying and says she wants justice, not vengeance. She has suffered, but so have many under Marcos. She says that he must go.

Aquino's emergence as the logical challenger of Marcos was not foregone. Until her husband was killed, she was scarcely known. "She brought out the coffee," says Jaime Ongpin. "She didn't take part in political discussions." That changed when she, Ongpin, and a few others formed the "convener group" in 1984 to unite the opposition to Marcos and agree on a presidential candidate. At the time, she was not considered a likely candidate. And she also played a passive role in the group's weekly meetings. She deferred last spring when others said she shouldn't appear at the convention of UNIDO, the second-largest party. Later she told others in the group that she would never let them bully her again. As a candidate, she hasn't.

Mrs. Aquino's political views are slightly left of center, similar to those of social democrats in Europe. The text given her for her first policy speech was baldly procapitalism. She put a social justice spin on it, and the spin became even more pronounced in her second programmatic address, on social policy. But she can be coldly pragmatic on matters of political strategy. Without consulting any of her advisers, she decided that Doy Laurel,

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the leader of UNIDO and a histrionic political orator, should be her running mate. Laurel once belonged to Marcos's party and is considered a schemer. But Mrs. Aquino insisted. When the ticket was about to fall apart in December, she decided on her own to run under the UNIDO banner. Why quibble over that when the price—disunity and the reelection of Marcos—was so high? She had no trouble with a tactical compromise that helps reach her single goal: ousting Marcos.

On two issues, her political immaturity surfaces. One is the fate of the two American installations, Subic Bay Naval Base and Clark Air Base. There is little clamoring in the Philippines to banish the American military. The U.S. government is the second biggest employer in the country; 43,000 Filipinos work at the two bases. Marcos is clear on this issue, arguing correctly that the bases are strategically crucial to both the United States and the Philippines. "I cannot imagine any serious leader wanting to take out the Americans from those bases," he says. But Mrs. Aquino has flip-flopped. In December 1984 she signed a statement of the convener group that declared: "Foreign military bases on Philippine territory must be removed and no foreign military bases shall hereafter be allowed." A year later, in the "minimum program" for her presidency, she said the United States can keep the bases at least until 1991, when the current lease expires. "Since many events may occur between now and 1991, we shall keep all our options open." More recently, she said she favors "eventual removal of the bases, but like my husband I have not set any particular date."

The other troublesome issue for her is the New Peoples Army, the Communist rebels whose ruthlessness has been compared to that of the Khmer Rouge. Marcos has been remarkably inept in combating the NPA, refusing to fire unprofessional generals and spending less on the military than tiny Singapore does. Aquino would make matters worse by transferring military money to social programs. The rebellion would all but melt away if the economic and social conditions improved, she says. "I believe the Filipino, because of his cultural tradition and because of his religion, cannot possibly accept communism." The threat, however, is not that communism might be accepted, but that it might be imposed.

The immediate fear of the opposition is that Marcos will impose himself on the Philippines by stealing the election. A joke is told in Manila that has Reagan, Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, and Marcos flying on a plane that is about to crash. Only one parachute is available. Reagan demands it as the leader of the free world. Gorbachev demands it as the leader of the Communist orbit. Marcos says a vote is in order. He counts and declares himself the winner, 14 to two.

BUT WAIT. Isn't this the country to which the United States bequeathed democracy and the habit of honest and fair elections? Unfortunately corruption has always been widespread in the Philippines, and 20 years of Marcos has only made it worse. Twice elected, Marcos ordered martial law in 1972, the year before he would have had to leave office. It was lifted in 1981. But by then the institutions of democracy had been weakened—the civil service demoralized, the military politicized, the judiciary made subservient to Marcos. With some justification, the opposition sees the Commission on Elections as an arm of Marcos. It declined to force the government-owned TV station, Channel 4, to honor the equal-time provision and cover Aquino as much as Marcos. The channel, the only one reaching the entire Philippines, has been covering Marcos's speeches live, while ignoring Aquino. Government lawyers claimed the provision didn't apply to Marcos. The channel also peppers viewers with thinly disguised propaganda promoting the Marcos regime.

Meanwhile, Aquino cannot get her ads on television. Another agency of the Marcos regime, the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board, says all ads have to be submitted to it for review. Three weeks before the election, not a single Aquino spot had been aired. The commercial channels are also affected. The anchor on one was fired for devoting too much airtime to Aquino's appearances; the anchor was later restored. The most egregious example of TV's tilt came in December when Representative Jack F. Kemp and his wife, Joanne, visited Manila. At a televised dinner, Kemp wore a yellow tie, his wife a yellow blouse. Those happen to be Aquino colors (from the song "Tie a Yellow Ribbon" that was associated with Ninoy Aquino's return from exile). On television the color was altered and the tie and blouse were green.

MARCOS has given mixed signals on the honesty of the vote count. He put General Fidel Ramos, regarded as a man of integrity, in charge of securing the ballot boxes. But Marcos's followers are waging a campaign against the National Movement for Free Elections, the private group certified as poll watchers. NAMFREL activity in the parliamentary election in 1984 made it one of the most honest in years, and 70 opposition candidates were elected. Now a Marcos crony has demanded that NAMFREL's leader, Jose Concepcion, resign because there are 16 voters registered at his house; Concepcion, a wealthy man, says they are mostly maids and houseboys. And a pamphlet is being distributed that links NAMFREL to the CIA.

Concepcion has already concluded that the election won't be fair. On top of everything else, the government's one million employees are being marshaled as a campaign cadre for Marcos. The question now is whether the vote count will be honest. Marcos's agents have opposed a "quick count" by NAMFREL, which might reduce the chances for stealing by either side. They want the elections commission to make the count. NAMFREL has a powerful ally in Jaime Cardinal Sin, the archbishop of Manila, who issued a call to conscience on January 19. Addressing Marcos and his forces, the cardinal said: "If a candidate wins by cheating, he can only be forgiven by God if he renounces the office he has obtained by fraud. There will be no divine forgiveness for this act of injustice without a

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previous decision to repair the damage done." The cardinal also suggested that a voter who took money to vote for Marcos is morally free to back someone else. Tough talk, but it's not likely to sway Marcos. His wife thinks the Catholic Church is riddled with left-wing priests who support liberation theology.

Marcos isn't about to renounce reelection, no matter how he wins it, but he might call off the election. If NPA violence hits the cities, he says, that would justify putting off the voting. Actually, there probably would be more urban violence if he canceled the election than if he didn't. And backing down now may not be politically feasible; the momentum unleashed by the campaign is too great. Besides, Marcos could win without stealing votes, since he still has considerable popularity. Or he could win an election marred by blatant voting irregularities. Either way, it would be back to square one, with Marcos confronting all the problems he has failed to surmount: stagnant economy, burgeoning Communist insurgency, angry opposition, restless American officials. He has promised reform after the election. "We are going to reorganize the whole government," he said January 13, possibly tossing out the measure giving him the power to issue decrees. But he has made such promises before, and failed to deliver. Senator Gramm suggested to seven Filipino businessmen that Marcos would finally shape up once he'd won. Forget it, all seven told him.

The conventional wisdom has it that Aquino can't win. A prominent business supporter says it would take "a miracle." It might, but stranger things have happened. The mammoth crowds she attracts aren't the only evidence of support; well-wishers line the streets and hold up her motorcade wherever she travels. On the other hand, the Aquino campaign is not organized enough to get all these folks to the polls. What's harder to imagine than an Aquino triumph is a peaceable transfer of power—in other words, Marcos's yielding the palace. Some officials of the Reagan administration fear a military coup. Marcos doesn't discourage such talk. An Aquino victory "would mean a bloody confrontation, especially if she follows through with a policy" of bringing Communists into her cabinet. Still, Marcos says he will step down if the voters decide that way. "But of course." He'd merely become the leader of the political opposition.

Aquino hasn't exactly eased Marcos's anxiety by publicly saying she wants to put him on trial for her husband's murder. Would the generals in Argentina have stepped down if their successors had been vowing to prosecute them? Not likely. But Aquino takes a softer position when questioned. Prosecution "would be up to the courts," she says. Calling him "the number one suspect . . . is better than for me to say outright that he will go free because some of his victims may want to take the law in their own hands, and I want to avoid that." She'd even allow him to remain politically active. "Why not? My goodness, if I want to bring back democracy to this country, I'd be the last person to object." Despite what Marcos says, the prospect of joining the opposition is no more alluring than the prospect of a trial. Marcos, remember, is an autocrat used to a regal life. Giving that up won't be easy.

Meet Brian Urquhart, Mr. United Nations.

THE MAN WHO FELL TO EARTH

BY PHILIP WEISS

SOON AFTER ARRIVING at the office of Brian E. Urquhart, the extravagantly admired under secretary-general of the United Nations who is about to retire after serving the U.N. since its inception, I found that my tape recorder wouldn't start. "Try dropping it," Urquhart said, and I asked, nervously, "From how many feet up?" and laughed. Urquhart didn't laugh; he just looked at me with his somewhat dolorous eyes. I was mortified. I had brought up the one thing I'd told myself not to mention—the fall.

Philip Weiss wrote "Inside a Bathhouse" for TNR (December 2, 1985).

The fall took place in 1942, when Urquhart, in his early 20s, was on maneuvers in the British army. He dropped from a plane, his parachute failed to open, and he fell 1,200 feet before crumpling in a plowed field. After seven months in a hospital he was back in action. Probably the worst thing about the fall is the way it has clung to Urquhart's reputation. Often it's the first thing people say about him. Kurt Waldheim introduces him by way of the fall in a forthcoming volume of U.N. memoirs (though he gets the story wrong). It also supplied the opening paragraphs of a paean to Urquhart by Earl Foell, the editor in chief of the *Christian Science Monitor*, in which Foell lobbied for him to be a recipient of the Nobel Peace

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Prize. Moshe Dayan mentions Urquhart in *Breakthrough*, his description of the Camp David accords, but has just one thing to say. "I felt a special warmth for Urquhart because of something that happened to him during the Second World War," Dayan writes. ". . . He fell like a stone."

There isn't a U.N. official more respected than Brian Urquhart, no one more sincere or unflagging in expressing the U.N.'s best hope. And yet, sift his record and you're left with the feeling that his most remarkable achievement is the one that preceded all the rest: surviving the drop from a height equal to that of the Empire State Building.

The tape recorder inexplicably began working and we were ready to go. Urquhart set just two ground rules: I should cut him off when he rambled too far off the subject ("This is the problem with me"), and I should holler when the phone buzzed, because at 67 he is slightly hard of hearing.

First I asked if he could fill me in on a story, bits of which I'd heard here and there, about a Moroccan goat. Urquhart went blank for a second, squinted, then started in on the Congo, 1960, where he led one of the many peacekeeping forces by which he established his reputation. "Moroccans are wonderful people, I must say," he said. "And they had a very grand regimental goat, with its horns tipped in gold, a most dignified animal. We found that the goat had a much greater effect on the crowds than anything else did, so we used to parade the goat. I'll tell you another thing, if you're ever going on military expeditions, a band is terribly important—the band is better than a battalion of tanks, provided you can get them to play without getting shot."

Read "mili-tree" for military and you have the mood. It's to a great extent this combination of the dry and ready British manner, the freely offered love of other peoples' customs, and the charming recounting of perilous adventures that has earned Urquhart the lavish praise ("a saintly man"—David Halberstam; "extraordinarily caring, extraordinarily decent"—former U.N. ambassador Donald McHenry; "carry[ing] on the tradition of the great generalists"—former U.N. ambassador Daniel Patrick Moynihan) that has equipped him for such regular appearances between Urology and Uruguay in the newspaper indexes of the last 25 years ("unflappable"—*Jerusalem Post*; "unflappable"—*Christian Science Monitor*; "unflappable"—*Washington Post*; "unflappable"—*New York Times*).

The product of Fabian parents and the best British education, Brian E. Urquhart first came to international prominence in the fall of 1961 during that dubious adventure in liberal activism, the U.N. military operation in the newly independent Congo. Blood was shed, some of it Urquhart's, and though not always unflappable, he exhibited the flexibility and loyalty that have marked his career.

DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Of the three battles U.N. troops fought in keeping the nation intact, Urquhart oversaw the second, which helped to put down the secession of Katanga, the richest part of the Congo. Halberstam, then the *Times* man in the Congo, remembers flying into Elisabethville with Urquhart in late November 1961. The new U.N. representative to Katanga said to him: "Tell me about Tshombe [the rebel leader]. I *do* want to get on with Tshombe." A day or so later Tshombe's men seized Urquhart at a party, beat him severely, then abducted him and held him for several hours at gunpoint before Tshombe helped gain his release. Five days later Urquhart was on the front pages again, saying, "Matters now are in the hands of the military." U.N. troops had planes and heavy arms, and Urquhart has acknowledged that there were atrocities on both sides.

Since then, in the face of arguments that the U.N. may only have made matters worse in the Congo, Urquhart has assailed the U.N.'s naïveté in landing itself in a "nasty little war . . . a dingdong struggle." But he insists that the mission fulfilled the Security Council's ends: stabilizing the Congo and preserving its independ-

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ence from East and West. The operation was "comparable in novelty with the first voyage to the moon," he wrote in one analysis—in which he typically left out his own involvement.

Such a faceless posture, though, is the correct one for the humble international civil servant. Urquhart's institutional loyalty has truly been awesome. He was an adviser to the first secretary-general, Trygve Lie. He has always defended the disastrous decision by the third secretary-general, U Thant, to remove the peacekeeping forces from the Sinai in 1967 without referring the matter to the Security Council, a decision in which Urquhart was involved. A tedious exchange of letters with U Thant concerning his having gotten permission to pursue an "outside activity" occupies much of the foreword of Urquhart's biography of the second secretary-general, Dag Hammarskjöld. This meticulously researched and critically applauded book sometimes lost its man in a chronicle of the secretary-general's term; *Hammarskjöld* can be read as a 600-page monument to the painful joy of U.N. service (it twice praises a U.N. phone handler, "a switchboard operator of genius").

Urquhart's other big hero at the U.N. was Under Secretary-General Ralph J. Bunche, whose biography he plans to work on once he leaves for the Ford Foundation. Bunche was Urquhart's mentor, and Urquhart visited his hospital room every day when he lay on his deathbed in 1971.

Urquhart was then in his 50s, and his own personality began to emerge publicly. By the time the *New Yorker* paid a visit in 1972, he'd become a U.N. spokesman, at once ironical and adulatory. He had, for example, fashioned his horrible night in Katanga into an advertisement of the importance of all the talking that went on at the U.N. Little mention now of the terror; Urquhart recalled chatting with a captor to keep murder at bay. "Turned out he had one ambition—to visit the ballet in Paris. 'You're going about it the wrong way, *mon vieux*,' I said. 'This is no way to get to Paris. You kill me and you won't get anywhere. There's no ballet down that road.' I talked and talked, and I became rhapsodic about the ballet. . . ." (An Irish foreign service officer who was there gave a less cinematic description of the night: on his feet, but swaying, his bashed face bloody and unrecognizable, the about-to-be-abducted Urquhart politely said, "*Il y a erreur, messieurs.*")

IN 1974 Urquhart got Bunche's job. By all accounts he's been tireless, but his successes have been minor, somehow forgettable: his negotiation of a PLO cease-fire in southern Lebanon in 1981, for instance. More often he is to be seen emerging from unfruitful negotiations to pronounce that the dialogue has been "extremely helpful" (Namibia, 1979) or "very helpful" (Lebanon, 1985). There were hopes of a U.N. administrative and peacekeeping mission in Namibia to bring the country to independence, but nothing came of Urquhart's talks. No breakthrough in Cyprus, either. He has been unable to convince the Israelis to allow the peacekeeping force in southern Lebanon to extend its area of control south to the Israeli border, and in the Sinai and Beirut the interposition of new U.N. forces has been rejected in favor of multinational forces. In the latter case, in 1983, Urquhart achieved a bitter triumph when the press played up his warning that the force in Beirut was ill-conceived.

Always chin up, Urquhart has been brittle only in the annual reports he says he writes for delivery by the secretary-general. In 1982 Javier Perez de Cuellar said that the U.N. had been "set aside or rebuffed . . . time after time," and "urgently" called on the world community to use such instruments as peacekeeping. No progress a year later: the report noted the "partial paralysis of the U.N. as a guardian of international peace and security" in spite of conflicts that "cry out" for peacekeeping.

As everyone around the U.N. will tell you, the real successes of peacekeeping are rarely noted: the calm in Cyprus, the fine record of the U.N. forces on the Golan Heights in not allowing Syrian and Israeli patrols to clash, even the relative effectiveness of UNIFIL on Israel's northern border before the 1982 invasion. And yet the most painful fact must be that peacekeeping operations, which Urquhart has compared to "penicillin" and which he asserted as recently as 1983 were "lifesavers . . . likely [to be] called for again and again in times of need," have not been called for since 1978.

"No one could possibly be a more honorable servant of the concept of the United Nations than Brian Urquhart, absolutely genuine and completely dedicated, his whole life and his sacred honor," says Charles M. Lichenstein, a U.N. critic and former aide to Jeane Kirkpatrick who is now at the Heritage Foundation. What's interesting about Urquhart's progress, though, is that as events have pushed him and the U.N. further and further into the wings, that dedication has seemed to demand from him some proof of its meaning, and he's tended to dramatize the U.N.'s role.

LAST YEAR on a BBC program he argued that if the U.N. had not rolled up its sleeves in the Congo, the United States and the Soviet Union probably would have ended up fighting there. Similarly, if the U.N. forces in Cyprus and the Golan Heights were removed, there would be "world-class crisis" within days. ("Nonsense," says Lichenstein, who otherwise praises the Golan Heights force.) The insertion of U.N. peacekeeping forces in the Mideast in 1973 averted "a world-class conflict." The U.N. played a major part both in the cease-fire then, Urquhart says, and in the 1974 Geneva conference that, he reminds us, led to Camp David. However, Urquhart is not mentioned in the memoirs of Kissinger, Carter, Vance, or (except for the parachute failure) Dayan. And Kissinger's account of the events following the October war stresses what pains were taken to exclude the U.N. from any substantive role, notably allowing Waldheim to convene the 1974 talks but not to participate in them.

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Urquhart's boosters (among them Margaret Thatcher and Yale University, which awarded him an honorary degree) have credited him with saving thousands of lives. This may be the case, but it hasn't been enough for Urquhart. The U.N. has developed "back ways of avoiding World War III," he explained in a commencement address last May at the Georgetown School of Foreign Service. He warned that the cynicism that surrounds the U.N. today is reminiscent of the cynicism that engulfed the League of Nations in the 1930s, leading ultimately to world war—this time the cynicism could be "terminal." He told the BBC that even the destruction of KAL 007 and the invasion of Afghanistan were events that, had the U.N. not been standing by to cool the boiling rhetoric, were "likely to blow the whole place up."

Urquhart doesn't scant his own role in these crises. He's shown reporter after reporter the disarmed green cluster bomb from Lebanon on the edge of his desk, and he has spoken often of the 3 a.m. phone calls he gets whenever crisis looms. "Bedroom diplomacy," the *Times* calls it. One senses that the theater of the job has begun to overtake its substance.

A PHONE CALL interrupted our discussion of the dangers of nuclear proliferation.

BEU: And of course you mustn't completely rule out the possibility of a loony. I mean, we don't have any ranking loonies at the moment like Hitler or someone like that, but there are some pretty promising sort of junior league loonies around the place, come to think of it, aren't there? [phone buzzes] And who's to tell when they'll get into the big leagues.

PW: That was a buzz.

This call lasted longer. "Akhmed, Akhmed," Urquhart kept saying fondly.

I'd been penciled in at 3:30 in the red *Economist* daybook gilt-stamped B.E.U., but outside the 38th-floor window Manhattan was growing dark. As an interviewer I had been mostly audience, and sometimes when I tried to ask a question, Urquhart simply raised his voice in a grandfatherly way. Always witty, sharp, and engaging, always another loony to tell me about. ("You were dealing with a real sort of jungle jim. Munongo! [snort], a sort of loony minister of interior. I liked him. He was being pushed from behind the scenes by a gimcrack collection of soldiers of fortune. A bunch of loonies, some colonel called Falques, a completely fanatical character [voice fluting]. *Ici nous nous trouvons dans une pleine négritude!* I don't know what the hell he thought he was going to find in Africa. Absolutely wonderful man, I've got a picture of him somewhere actually. [Sets off across his room.] Oh, damn, if that book's gone, that is the end. My favorite book. Dammit. Terrible. Where in the hell has that gone. Don't say somebody's taken that. That is the end. [Book found.] Look at him, he's holding a hand grenade, and that cigarette out of the side of his mouth. Typical. Colonel Falques after breakfast. Loony character, he was running things, he was a real menace. Yes, anyhow. [voice trails off]")

Urquhart finished up on the phone, saying, "Yes, well, give us a blast when you get to town."

He wound things up with me on a solemn theme: that the U.N. still has a great future, that even as the global picture gets grimmer, we are being brought together by the revolution in communications, etc., and that one day the world would need an instrument to settle things, and would turn to the U.N. "Sooner or later it will work," Urquhart said softly. "Not in my time probably." It was an emotional moment, even if his optimism seemed misguided. I thought of him popping up from the plowed field, unvanquished.

URQUHART walked me out to the elevator. Before he moved off briskly I took a last look at his compact but impressive figure: the upper body telescoped by the fall; the concave nose sculpted by that Katangan; the steel-gray hair and long, noble, open face, the product of 40 years of trotting after a dream. How had Urquhart sustained his idealism and loyalty so long? And why?

For one thing, he is such an organization man that over the years the internal orderliness of peacekeeping missions has begun to seem to him a vision of world order. These missions are microcosms, he has written. Touring one is a healthy antidote to the cynicism about the United Nations. "International cooperation can be fun!" he told me. Urquhart has even argued that we might achieve world understanding if we could only have a peacekeeping force that includes American and Soviet troops (an idea the superpowers reject).

His mistaking bureaucratic order for global order suggests something that others have pointed out: Urquhart's worldview was formed by his British imperial training. He might even have acknowledged as much during the afternoon I met with him. He was searching his shelves for a pamphlet that he said explained politics absolutely. "Damn, don't say that book is gone," he mumbled. "I can't stand it. The greatest book in the world. That is the bloody end!"

The next day I found the palm-size tract bound with a dozen other texts in the Public Library annex: *Microcosmographia Academica* by F. M. Cornford, 1923. It was a semi-ironical guide to English college boys who understood they were about to go out and rule the world. "The British Empire is the outcome of College and School discipline and of the Church catechism," it said.

The little book had a chapter on how the world was made up of jobs, mine and yours; we both had to be taken care of. What you had to do was walk up and down the King's Parade at Cambridge and run into others and casually raise the subject—you'd get a job. "Remember this: the men who get things done are the men who walk up and down the King's Parade from 2 to 4, every day of their lives. You can either join them, and become a powerful person, or you can join the great throng of those who spend all their time in preventing them from getting things done. . . ." □

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

More Manhattan Blues

Woody Allen's new film *Hannah and Her Sisters* is about Hannah and her two sisters and her parents and her husband and her ex-husband and her sisters' various boyfriends. Of all these characters the most vivid is the ex-husband, played by Allen, and for a dismal reason: it's the same old Allen performance—the sniveling New York Jew, neu-

Hannah and Her Sisters
(Orion)

rotic, self-deprecating, lecherous, trying to win women and us through the candid display of unattractiveness. At least we know this Allen persona, whatever his current name; the other characters, starting from scratch, don't get much past scratch. Although the picture spreads its attention fairly evenly among them, most of them end up as supporting cast because they are only life-size puppets.

The picture begins and ends with Thanksgiving dinners given by Hannah, played by Mia Farrow. She is married to Michael Caine and was previously married to Allen. Her parents are show folk played by Maureen O'Sullivan (Farrow's actual mother) and Lloyd Nolan (dead since the film was finished). One sister, Dianne Wiest, is a failing actress-singer who does cocaine. The other, Barbara Hershey, no occupation given, lives with a middle-aged Soho painter, Max von Sydow.

Everyone has a problem, of course, large or less large, self-created or inflicted by others. Set in Manhattan, the film interweaves all these problems; often with voice-over comment by the principal person in a sequence, with an epigraph before each sequence. Hannah, though principal in the title, is the dullest of the lot, not because of Farrow but because the character is simply a patient ninny whose problem consists of not understanding why her husband is paying her less attention than usual. Caine, whose cockney presence in this group is unexplained, is smitten with her sister, Hershey; ultimately maneuvers himself into an affair with her; and persuades her to leave von Sydow. The (quite secret) affair continues until Hershey takes courses at Columbia and falls for her professor. Wiest finally gives up the theater—actually, it's more vice versa—and tries writing. She and Allen had gone out on one disastrous date after his divorce; now he takes up with her again, and this time it clicks. O'Sullivan and Nolan supply a background steeped in contention: their troubles are caused by Ma's still-wandering eye.

The script gives the impression that Allen, who wrote it, keeps notes. He jots down Manhattan phenomena (Tower Records, Bobby Short) and problems or odd situations. When he has enough of these—and even when he doesn't—he sorts them out into little stacks, gives them names, and assumes that they are characters. With the exception of the elderly parents and of Allen, none of the nominal characters seems the habitation of a particularized human being; each seems a folder pulled from a file. Allen, much like Neil Simon in method if not tone, deals in recognitions. We spot the hang-ups as we spot the locales. And, again like Simon, Allen makes sure that, no matter how stormy the sea of troubles, almost everyone ends up safe. *Interiors*, Allen's worst disaster, was also about three sisters and their troubled parents and troubled love lives, and it was further burdened by his film-school imitation of Bergman. He steers clear of Bergmanizing here (although the casting of von Sydow is apparently both a homage and a signal of gravity). But *Hannah* cuts no deeper than *Interiors* and, if less jokey, is almost equally tedious.

Once again Allen wants us to treat him seriously because he treats serious matters: for example, a childless couple who ask the husband of a couple they know for artificial insemination; cocaine; an irresistible affair that especially tries the loyalties of the pair because the man is the husband of the woman's sister. But Allen never asks himself what he can add, in perception, to what we already know about his subjects. We are meant to gush with gratitude merely because we are being spared another picture about teenagers or space adventure or espionage. And then, to certify his exalted state, he veneers his film with culture: quotations from Tolstoy and e. e. cummings, bits of Puccini and Bach. These merit badges only make the body of the picture look more spindly.

Because of von Sydow's presence, because of the attempted spectrum of comfy people's problems, I couldn't help thinking of another film made—as *Hannah* is, even at a remove—under the influence of Bergman. *Wetherby*, written and directed by David Hare (TNR, August 12&19, 1985), committed cinematic gaffes and ended only by presenting its characters; but most of them *were* characters, fixed by intelligence and delin-

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Out of Africa. This adaptation of Isak Dinesen's autobiographical book wobbles, but if it were worse than it is, it would still be welcome: because it gives Meryl Streep the chance for a spacious, large-spirited performance as the author before she *was* an author. (Reviewed 1/20/86)

Ran. Japanese for "chaos." Akira Kurosawa's derivation from *King Lear*, set in 16th-century Japan. It misses tragedy, but Kurosawa handles battles as Mars himself might. (1/6&13/86)

Shoah. An increment to the conscience of civilization. Claude Lanzmann's nine-and-a-half-hour weaving of testimony about the Final Solution—interviews with survivors, bystanders, and participants—though it cannot be as complete as the best histories, supplies what they lack: ineradicable presence. (Note: all of the film was shot after 1976. No archival footage.) The title, if you do not yet know, means "holocaust" in Hebrew. (10/28/85)

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eated with art. Our disappointment was in not getting what the film's very texture promised. In *Hannah* there are no disappointments because, as we soon see, there are only lean expectations.

The performances are as quasi-anesthetic as the script. O'Sullivan and Nolan at least have some salt. Farrow does what she can, but in an actor's sense she has nothing to do, though it's a big part. Compliments about her versatility—after the tough moll in *Broadway Danny Rose* and the dishrag in the *The Purple Rose of Cairo*—will have to wait until she gets more than monochrome parts. Caine, usually a nicely inflected actor, is somewhat stolid here. Von Sydow valiantly tries to make something of an utterly cliché role—a painter who resents cheap patrons, a middle-aged lover who knows his love is doomed. Hershey, though less physically compelling than she used to be, still has some appeal, if not much talent. Wiest, for me, is another Glenn Close: technical competence that relentlessly reveals shallowness.

Allen stands out, more by default than design. Here he's a TV producer, with the same old nerves and hypochondria. The one really gripping moment in his performance—in the film—comes after extensive hospital examinations when he is told that he has an inoperable brain tumor. This, I thought, is a splendid idea: to make a comic hypochondriac face a dreadful reality. This, I thought, is a real leap, an act of daring, a true exploration for Allen. My expectation lasted about 12 seconds. The announcement of the tumor is only his fantasy, another facet of his hypochondria. Back Allen sinks into the familiar. Inevitably some of what he says and does is funny. After his "escape" from death, he seeks the meaning of life by investigating religion—Catholicism and Buddhism; and he gets some laughs out of his quest. But it all goes nowhere, except the usual snug ending, as he puts his act on hold for his next picture.

His directing continues at the good level he first established in *A Midsummer Night's Sex Comedy*, though once in a while in *Hannah* he is tempted into the showy (like the circling of the restaurant table when the three sisters have lunch). Carlo di Palma, the gifted Italian cinematographer (*Red Desert, Blow-Up*), does his very considerable best for *Hannah*.

Two Nits Picked: the New York church that Allen approaches in his Catholic phase is not Catholic. The name of the harpsichordist in the Bach concerto is Gustav Leonhardt, not the other way around.

ROBERT BRUSTEIN ON THEATER

The Infidelity Play

When the curtain rose at the Brooks Atkinson Theatre on Michael Frayn's new and highly acclaimed *Benefactors*, my blood froze. Addressing the audience were Sam Waterston and Glenn Close,

Benefactors
by Michael Frayn

Prairie du Chien
The Shawl
by David Mamet

two accomplished American actors, speaking in those simulated British cadences that are swiftly becoming the national language of the Broadway stage. Miss Close, through recent practice in a long run of *The Real Thing*, was considerably better drilled in her consonants and vowels than Mr. Waterston, but even to compare them this way suggests the issue that distracted me. Broadway theater is now so dominated by West End hits and English revivals that our actors must be evaluated less on the basis of emotional power or interpretive depth than of their facility with dialects and capacity to project sangfroid.

There's not a hell of a lot more to act in *Benefactors* than sangfroid and dialect. Michael Frayn is already being compared with Chekhov, whom he has translated and adapted, but this is to confuse a journalist with a poet. Al-

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though *Benefactors* is admittedly a more human product than that intricately manufactured, clackety-clacking apparatus of his called *Noises Off*, it is still the work of an artificer rather than an artist. An editorialist by nature, Mr. Frayn appears to have written a lead article about the evils of social engineering—and it is nice to welcome a play with some kind of public dimension. But the piece is really another story of marital treachery on the order of Pinter's *Betrayal*, Stoppard's *The Real Thing*, and Nichols's *Passion*. Describing his experience as Sunday critic for the *New York Times* in a new book, *First Nights*, Benedict Nightingale expands on his controversial perception that young American dramatists usually write "diaper dramas" about the difficulty of growing away from parents. But his own countrymen are becoming even more obsessed with infidelity dramas about the woes of exchanging wives and husbands. This (presumably) more mature subject originated in the plays of Noel Coward, the father of modern English drama. But its lukewarm blood is more appropriate in the veins of a wit comedy, such as *Design for Living*, than in these well-made domestic dramas about the guilty consequences of successful careers.

CHEKHOV, too, occasionally wrote about sexual infidelity (*The Seagull*), not to mention adultery, both actual (*Three Sisters*) and failed (*Uncle Vanya*), but his purpose was to reveal character, not to wallow publicly in the remorse of conscience. And when he dealt with social issues such as the breakdown of classes or the future of progress, he took no sides. "I am not a liberal and not a conservative," he wrote, "not an evolutionist, nor a monk, nor indifferent to the world. I would like to be a free artist—and that is all." Significantly, he added that "the artist should not be a judge of his characters . . . let the jury pass judgment on them." Frayn, on the other hand, is continually manipulating his people into one artificial contrivance or another, since they exist to illustrate a predetermined theme rather than to display a free and independent life of their own.

The theme is announced in the opening remarks to the audience (half the play is audience-directed narrative) when David, an architect, tells us he has landed "one of those great slum clearance jobs" and is going to build a new world for low-income people in Basuto Road. The rest of the play chronicles the degeneration of this urban rehabilitation ideal as a result of rules, ordinances, cables, gas leaks, bad concrete, politics, and ego drives. David's wife, Sheila—an anthropologist in "Basutoland," interviewing the very people David is building for—is bemused about his goals; his friend, a baleful down-and-out journalist named Colin, is actively hostile to them; Colin's wife, Jane, looks on David as some kind of domestic and social savior. As each couple gets increasingly intrigued with the other's spouses, David becomes more obsessed with building skyscrapers than helping the poor. Colin joins the squatters protesting these master-builder grandiosities, using his journalistic skills to invent anti-high-rise slogans ("Don't scrape the skies, just sweep the streets"). Following the obligatory domestic confrontations, where Jane twice throws a bowl of brown stew in her husband's face, the entire scheme is rejected by the Ministry, leaving the four characters to reflect on the human issues: "It was people. That's what wrecks all our plans—people."

Well, as T. S. Eliot would say, that is one way of putting it—not very satisfactory. A sociological study in a worn-out convention. Michael Blakemore has been commissioned to give some active life to this set of architectural disquisitions and marital squabbles, and he does so with a Le Creuset cookware production as smooth and enameled as the play. Michael Annals's all-wooden design consists largely of two rooms against a South London skyline—the decaying parlor of Colin and Jane and the little Switzerland kitchen of David and Sheila—with everything but the dishware in shades of brown. The characters mime eating and walk through invisible walls, usually to punctuate a witty speech. The presence of children is suggested by occasional references and crayon drawings on the wall. The three Americans in the cast often seem more British than the single Englishman (Simon Jones), though only Sam Waterston, hangdog and stumbling as David, seems more uncomfortable. Glenn Close brings her patented womanly warmth to the part of Sheila, and Mary Beth Hurt has a nice intense doggedness as Jane. Simon Jones, who looks like a crumpled, seedy Gene Kelly, uses a tenor voice at the tonal level of Spike Milligan's (one half note higher and he'd be on *The Goon Show*). In short, another British victory in a theater on the verge of surrender, interesting only for the way it shows the Reagan-Thatcher disdain for social action entering the consciousness of writers for the stage.

CRITICS sometimes explain the presence of all these overrated English properties on our commercial territory by saying that Americans are not writing well enough for Broadway. Well, perhaps they're not always writing adroitly enough, but although our native drama sometimes looks slovenly—like the untidy gropings of such powerful English writers as Caryll Churchill and David Hare—I find it a good deal more interesting than the stainless steel mechanisms of the West End engineers. One of these dramatists, David Mamet, is currently represented on the stage of the Mitzi Newhouse with two short plays, *Prairie du Chien* and *The Shawl*, which while miniature, provide a bigger lift than most things I've seen lately. I don't mean to make exaggerated claims for these works. They are exercises for Mamet's left hand, and admittedly a cautious beginning for the newly opened Lincoln Center Theater Company under the direction of Gregory Mosher and Bernard Gersten. But given the playwright's international reputation, not to mention his unexpected Broadway success with *Glengarry Glen Ross*—and considering the unusually modest ticket prices at the Mitzi Newhouse—it was astonishing to enter the theater on a Saturday night, three days after the opening, to find over one-third of the house empty. Clearly, New York is no longer a city interested in seeing plays as much as blockbusters, which may account for all those pre-tested imports on our commercial stage.

Prairie du Chien began as a radio play, and it unravels on the stage like a Faulkner short story. Set in the lounge car of a railway train, it is essentially a tale told by a cigar-smoking salesman (Jerry Stiller)—while a black barman serves drinks and other passengers play gin at a round green card table—about a jealous farmer who stuck a pitchfork in the heart of the black hired hand he found sleeping with his wife, then killed the wife, set fire to the barn, and hanged himself. The sheriff who inves-

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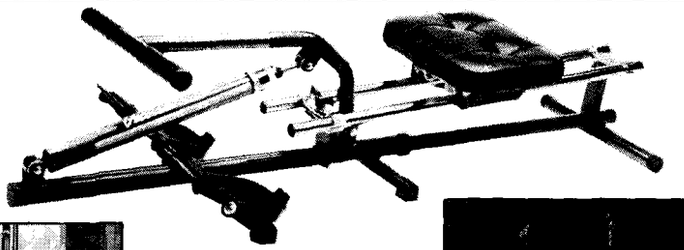

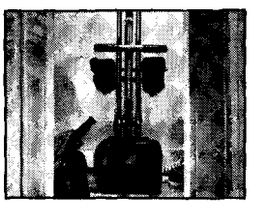

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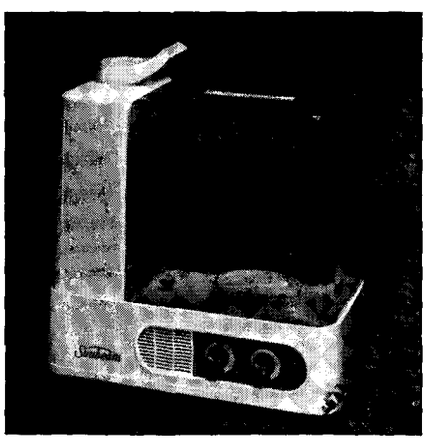

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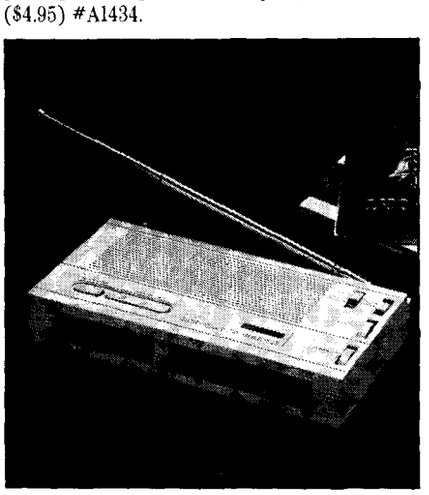

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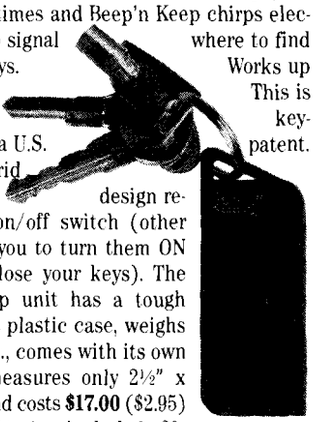

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tigated the affair was himself murdered three years later, after his wife had deserted him, by the father of a ten-year-old girl he had seduced. But this gothic vignette has intriguing supernatural overtones. When men come to investigate the murder of the hired hand, they find no one in the house except a glowing fawn and a pretty red dress, burning in the closet. Three years later the sheriff himself is discovered in a rocking chair, wearing a red gingham dress and saying, "Please help him . . . there in the barn . . . please help him." The play ends with an outburst of violence on the part of one of the card players, who pulls a gun on the partner he believes to be cheating him.

THIS atmosphere of unearthliness in a naturalistic setting is even more intense in the companion play, *The Shawl*. This concerns a middle-aged medium named John preparing, with the aid of his black male lover, Charles, to swindle a young woman who has come to him for counsel. Her mother has recently died and she now seeks advice about whether to contest the will. John seems to know a great deal about his client's past life, including her purpose in coming, and when he is alone with his lover, he explains how—nothing but imaginative guesswork. "Money, illness, love, that's all it ever is"—a psychic, after all, is merely someone who sees more clearly than others.

In the séance that follows, after having invented an elaborate story about a Boston-bred poltergeist that has made contact with the dead woman, John is exposed as a charlatan when he misidentifies a photograph his client has torn from a book as a picture of her dead mother. Yet, unaccountably, he knows about a red shawl she got from her mother and then said she lost five years ago, though she actually burnt it in a rage. He will later explain to Charles how he knew these facts, telling him, as he bids him farewell, "You are now equipped to live in a world without mystery." But the origins of important if small details of his knowledge remain unexplained, which leaves both him and us in uncertainty about the true extent of his powers.

All this is spoken in that terse, elliptical style—replete with interrupted sentences—that is the hallmark of Mamet's writing, but the new element is the suggestion of the supernatural and the mystical, all the more haunting for its quotidian context. Gregory Mosher captures these qualities in a detailed, exacting production, distinguished by Lindsay Crouse, who plays the woman with a tough repressed skepticism, and Mike Nussbaum as the medium, a forlorn ironist in baggy pants. *The Shawl* reminds me of one of Yeats's few contemporary prose plays, *Word Upon the Windowpane*, another story of a fake psychic unexpectedly possessed by a spirit (in her case, that of Jonathan Swift). Mamet is on a fascinating new trip that promises to open up whole new countries; it is characteristic, but no less cause for celebration, that his first tickets to mystery should be such a modest pair of ghost stories.

Bourgeois Britain and its Marxist historians.

THE GROUP

BY GERTRUDE HIMMELFARB

"WHY was there no Marxism in Great Britain?" A recent issue of the *English Historical Review* poses yet again one of the perennial problems in English history. Why, in the first country to meet all the conditions for a mass Marxist movement, was there no such movement? Why, in the country that gave birth to the "industrial revolution," was there no social revolution? Why, in the first country to create a proletariat worthy of the name, was the very word "proletariat" alien and exotic? These questions have been the staple of historical inquiry at least since Elie Halévy, early in the century, tried to explain the "miracle of modern England": the ability of England, by virtue of its unique institutions and traditions, to accommodate change, conciliate interests, and mitigate conflict.

There is another question, however, that has not often been asked. Why, in a country so resistant to Marxist socialism, have there been so many eminent Marxist historians? And not as mavericks, but as members of a respectable and influential (although not, to be sure, dominant) school. And influential precisely in the field of English history, offering Marxist interpretations of a history that has been notably inhospitable to Marxism as a political ideology.

Part of the answer lies in a fascinating and little-known episode in English intellectual history. It is only recently that we have come to know something of the origins of English Marxist historiography and to appreciate how well organized and consciously ideological it has been. The story is all the more interesting because it comes from the principals themselves and from their disciples, from memoirs and interviews, essays and books in which they are presented as a formal "Group" or "collective," as they themselves put it.

Two years ago one of the most influential historical journals in England opened its 100th issue by recalling its founding in 1952:

> The history of *Past and Present* begins in the years of the cold war with a group of young Marxist historians, at that time all members of the British Communist Party and enthusiastic participants in the activities of the "C. P. Historians' Group" which flourished notably in the years 1946 to 1956.

The essay goes on to describe the old "friends and comrades" who were involved in this new enterprise:

> They thus had the quadruple bond of a common past (most had known each other since the late 1930s), a common political commitment, a passion for history, and regular, indeed intensive, contact at the meetings of the Historians' Group at which they debated the Marxist interpretation of historical problems and did their best, in the military jargon then favored in Bolshevik circles, to "wage the battle of ideas" on the "front" most suitable to historians.

This account of the origins of *Past and Present* comes to us with the authority of three distinguished historians who were founders both of the Communist Party Historians' Group and of the journal—Christopher Hill, E. J. Hobsbawm, and R. H. Hilton; they are still active in the

Gertrude Himmelfarb is the author of the forthcoming *Marriage and Morals Among the Victorians* (Knopf).

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affairs of the journal. (Today Hill is president of the Past and Present Society, and Hilton and Hobsbawm are chairman and vice chairman of the editorial board. The fourth founder of the journal and the oldest member of the Historians' Group, Maurice Dobb, died in 1976.)

An earlier memoir by Hobsbawm, "The Historians' Group of the Communist Party," written in 1978, describes the organization that played, he is pleased to report, "a major part in the development of Marxist historiography" and thus in "the development of British historiography in general." The Historians' Group, we are told, was one of many professional and cultural groups operating under the aegis of the National Cultural Committee of the party—"from the Party's point of view," Hobsbawm adds, "the most flourishing and satisfactory" of them, attracting not only professional historians but also party leaders and union organizers. Its mission was to wage the "battle of ideas" (the "B of I," as it was familiarly known). It did so on several fronts. In addition to founding *Past and Present*, it organized conferences and celebrated anniversaries (1848 was commemorated by a dramatized version of the *Communist Manifesto* in Albert Hall), arranged for translations (of Marx and Engels, Lenin and Stalin, Gramsci and others), assigned historical projects to be carried out by individual members, and published, among other works, a four-volume collection of historical documents and a volume of essays, *Democracy and the Labour Movement*, that foreshadowed many of the themes now identified with Marxist history.

The Group included some of the best-known historians in Britain today: Eric Hobsbawm, Christopher Hill, Rodney Hilton, E. P. Thompson, George Rudé, Dorothy Thompson, Royden Harrison, John Saville, Victor Kiernan, George Thomson, Raphael Samuel. (Among those no longer alive, and remembered fondly and respectfully by the others, are Maurice Dobb and Dona Torr, whose membership in the party went back almost to its origin.) Hobsbawm comments on the curious fact that so many talented Communist intellectuals chose to become historians. But just as curious is the fact that so many talented historians chose to be Communists—and this not only in the 1930s, when the Depression, the Spanish Civil War, and the rise of Nazism made communism seem, to many intellectuals, the last hope of civilization, but also in the late 1940s and 1950s, when the main issue was the defense of the Soviet Union in the period of the Cold War.

In the Group's early years, Hobsbawm recalls, its members "segregated themselves strictly from schismatics and heretics," even from Marxists and Marxist sympathizers who had no party credentials. With the advent of the Popular Front in 1951, the Group became less sectarian (*Past and Present* reflecting this turn in the party line). In 1956, after Khrushchev's speech to the Twentieth Congress denouncing Stalin, and the Soviet invasion of Hungary later that year, many of the historians left the party. They retained, however, their personal associations, as well as a commitment to Marxism—unlike their confreres in France, Hobsbawm observes, where the break from the party generally resulted in a disaffection with Marxism. (Hobsbawm himself has remained in the party, and the Historians' Group continues to this day.)

During the whole of that time (which included, as Hobsbawm says, the "Stalin-Zhdanov-Lysenko years" of "ultra-rigid Stalinism"), the members of the Group saw no conflict between being a historian and being a Communist.

> Our work as historians was therefore embedded in our work as Marxists, which we believed to imply membership of the Communist Party. It was inseparable from our political commitment and activity. . . . We were as loyal, active and committed a group of Communists as any, if only because we felt that Marxism implied membership of the Party. To criticize Marxism was to criticize the Party, and the other way around.

Indeed, their loyalty to Marxism and the party was such that in retrospect Hobsbawm finds them excessively zealous. "There is no doubt that we ourselves were apt to fall into the stern and wooden style of the disciplined Bolshevik cadres, since we regarded ourselves as such." Thus their arguments on specific historical subjects—the English Revolution, for example—were "sometimes designed *a posteriori* to confirm what we already knew to be necessarily 'correct.' " If their work did not suffer more from the "contemporary dogmatism," he explains, it was because the authorized Marxist versions of history dealt with real problems and could be discussed seriously ("except where the

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political authority of the Bolshevik Party and similar matters were involved"); because there was no party line on most of British history and the work of Soviet historians was largely unknown to them; because "our loyalty and militancy were not in any doubt prior to 1956," so that party officials were well disposed to them; and because a "certain old-fashioned realism" in the party made it possible to criticize and modify some of the orthodox doctrines.

IT WAS in this milieu that some of the distinctive theories of British Marxist history were first formulated: about the nature of feudalism and absolutism, the development of capitalism, the character of the English Civil War, the relation of science and Puritanism to capitalism, the effect of industrialism on the standard of living of the working classes, the nature and role of the "labor aristocracy." The Group also contributed to the new social history—"history from below," the history of the "common people"—which became, as it were, a fellow traveler of Marxist history.

To a young American radical historian looking back upon that time, it must seem like a heroic age, when radical history had a coherent doctrine, a cohesive community, and a political purposiveness he might well envy. This is certainly the impression one gets from a recent book, *The British Marxist Historians*, by Harvey J. Kaye (Polity Press). The five historians who are the subjects of this study, all members of the original Group, are meant to suggest the range and diversity of Marxist scholarship and at the same time their shared concerns and themes—above all their common commitment to the writing of histories that are, Kaye insists, of "scholarly *and* political consequence."

Maurice Dobb was their founding father. "The major historical work which was to influence us crucially," Hobsbawm has said, "was Maurice Dobb's *Studies in the Development of Capitalism* which formulated our main and central problem." Published in 1946, the *Studies* coincided with the formation of the Group, but long before then Dobb had established himself as a leading Marxist "theoretician." He had joined the Communist Party in 1922, shortly after it was founded, and made the first of many visits to the Soviet Union three years later. From 1924 until his retirement in 1967 he was a lecturer and then reader in economics at Cambridge, where he became the mentor of generations of Communists and Communist sympathizers. (It is curious now to read of the debate in 1932 in which he argued for the motion, "This house sees more hope in Moscow than Detroit"; his opponent on that occasion was Kitson Clark, who later became one of the most eminent of non-Marxist English historians.)

Dobb described his *Studies* as a work in "historical economics," and it was as the application of Marxist economic theory to the historical development of capitalism that it was valued by the Historians' Group. Describing the emergence of capitalism in England, Dobb identified the two "decisive moments" in its development: the "bourgeois revolution" of the 17th century and the "industrial revolution" of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. As a prelude to these moments, he posited another: the "crisis" of feudalism in the 14th century, which set the stage for the transition to capitalism. In retrospect one can see in this schema something like an agenda for the historians in the Group, with Hilton taking up feudalism, Hill the English Revolution, and Hobsbawm and Thompson industrialism. Dobb relieved the others of the need to work out such details of the Marxist analysis as the primitive accumulation of capital and the concept of surplus value, and provided them with a more sophisticated version of Marxist economics than had been available to them.

Rodney Hilton, a generation younger than Dobb, joined the Communist Party while a student at Oxford before the war. He spent most of his professional career at the University of Birmingham, and was an active member of the Group until he left the party in 1956, after which he remained closely associated with his former comrades. He has explained how he came to take feudalism as his subject:

> As a communist I was interested in the potentialities for resistance to exploitation of the subordinated classes. It seemed sensible to begin with medieval peasants and craftsmen—of course within the general economic and social context of the time.

The radical nature of his enterprise (radical in both senses of the word) can be appreciated only by comparison with the prevailing theories of English feudalism. For his thesis requires not only the injection of the class struggle into a period more often thought of as relatively stable, but a redefinition of the very concept of feudalism. The conventional non-Marxist view (to oversimplify a vastly complicated subject) sees feudalism as essentially a relationship between the lord and his vassals, a relationship reflected in a social structure based on values and functions that were not necessarily, certainly not primarily, economic. Hilton has shifted the emphasis to the relationship between the lord and his peasants, with feudalism defined as

> the exploitative relationship between landowners and subordinated peasants, in which the surplus beyond subsistence of the latter, whether in direct labour or in rent in kind or in money, is transferred under coercive sanction to the former.

The serfs, so far from being passive victims of this process, were active agents of their own history; and the social order, so far from being static and stable, was ridden by class struggle. It was this struggle, reflected in peasant uprisings, that was the "motor" of medieval society and the principal cause of the "crisis" of feudalism.

This would seem to be an obvious Marxist interpretation of feudalism. Yet it was not Marx's own interpretation; Hilton was engaged, in effect, in a doubly revisionist enterprise. Marx regarded the peasantry as in a sense prehistorical. Having no historical mission, the peasants were a nonclass, "a sack of potatoes," as he once said. Hilton, by engaging the peasants in a class struggle, brought them into history and gave them the essential historical attribute of class, thus making them worthy of sympathy and respect. He also endowed them with a measure of "class consciousness." It was an imperfect class consciousness, to be sure, only intermittently achieved and all too often negative (expressing itself in the hatred of the landlord) and conservative (reflecting the "dominant ideology" of the ruling class). But it was also informed by a "peasant memory" of ancient rights and customs, which gave their struggle dignity and meaning.

THE NEXT historical "moment" was appropriated by Christopher Hill. After studying at Balliol in the early 1930s and gaining a coveted fellowship at All Souls, he spent a year in the Soviet Union, joining the Communist Party upon his return in 1936. Following a brief teaching stint at Cardiff, he re-

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turned to Balliol in 1938 as fellow and tutor. During the war he was transferred from the army to the Foreign Office, presumably because of his knowledge of Russian and of the Soviet Union. He resumed his lectureship at Oxford after the war and served as master of Balliol from 1965 until his retirement in 1978.

Hill's studies in the Soviet Union had focused on Soviet interpretations of the English Civil War, and his first important essay, *The English Revolution*, was written under the influence of the Russian historian E. A. Kosminsky (to whom Hilton, too, was much indebted). The title suggests the theme: the English Civil War was a revolution, "a great social movement like the French Revolution of 1789." The revolutionary nature of this thesis can be seen by comparison with the classical "Whig" interpretation, in which the Civil War appears primarily as a struggle for constitutional and religious liberty, and in which the "excesses" of the period make it an "interregnum" in the history of England. For Hill, the Civil War was a "class war" between a despotic king representing the "reactionary forces" of landlords and the Church, and Parliament representing the commercial and industrial classes in the towns, the yeomanry and "progressive gentry" in the countryside, and the enlightened elements among the "masses." In the course of that struggle, "an old order that was essentially feudal was destroyed by violence, and a new and capitalist social order was created in its place."

THIS THESIS provoked controversy not only among non-Marxist historians, but also among those Marxists who had located the beginnings of capitalism in the 16th century. Debated for years within the Historians' Group, the issue was resolved in 1948 when the Group endorsed the modified version of Hill's thesis that had appeared in Dobb's *Studies*. Hill himself then revised his essay to conform with that version. A third, slightly amended edition of 1955 has been reprinted half a dozen times and is still available.

Hill's later work, on cultural and intellectual subjects, is far more erudite and subtle than that early essay, but it remains within the framework of Marxism as he understands it. *The World Turned Upside Down* (1972) views the English Revolution not only as a successful bourgeois revolution, but also as a failed democratic revolution, an abortive revolution of the common people to subvert bourgeois supremacy. Masked in the language of religion, the Levellers espoused political equality, the Diggers communism, and the Ranters, although lacking any political or economic agenda, preached and practiced a revolutionary doctrine of "free love" that was a "negative reaction to nascent capitalism."

So too the *Intellectual Origins of the English Revolution* (1965) has a dual theme: it is a study not only of the origins of the revolution in particular scientific, legal, and historical ideas, but also of the economic and social origins and functions of the ideas themselves. Thus Walter Raleigh is said to have prepared the way for the Revolution in "the optimism and forward look of his belief in private enterprise, in empire, in Parliament"; and Francis Bacon caught "the optimism of the merchants and craftsmen, confident in their newfound ability to control their environment, including the social and political environment." (In 1951 Hill had compared Bacon with Lysenko: "Bacon inaugurated the bourgeois epoch in science as Lysenko and his colleagues are inaugurating the new epoch today. In the Soviet Union the obstructive dogmas of bourgeois science have to be brushed aside, to the indignation of the logic-choppers, if socialist science is to devote itself whole-heartedly to the relief of man's estate: so Bacon was fighting against the prejudices and dogmas of an effete civilisation.")

Although Hill left the Communist Party in 1957, he still looks back on the discussions in the Historians' Group as "the greatest stimulus I have ever known." Others pay tribute to him as the greatest stimulus of them all. Recalling the influence Hill had on him in those early years, Thompson describes him as a "formidable theoretical practitioner" who "restructured whole areas of historical consciousness in England." And Hobsbawm credits him with turning the attention of the Historians' Group to "the social history of *ideas*"—thus giving a new dimension to the "B of I."

Eric Hobsbawm has been called the "premier" Marxist historian in England, in part because of his continuing relationship with the Communist Party (he is still a member of the Histo-

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rians' Group and on the editorial board of *Marxism Today*, the organ of the party), in part because of his far-ranging scholarship and far-flung activities. He himself has attributed his political views and cosmopolitan interests to his personal history. We are told that his grandfather, a Russian Jew, emigrated to England in the 1870s, but not when or why his father and Austrian mother moved to Alexandria, where Hobsbawm was born in 1917. Two years later the family settled in Vienna; in 1931 they moved to Berlin, and in 1933 to London. Hobsbawm joined a Communist schoolboys' organization in Berlin, and completed his secondary—and Marxist—education in London. (He read Dobb soon after his arrival in England.) At Cambridge, where, he later recalled, "we were all Marxists," he was an active member of the Communist Party. He served in the education corps during the war, completed his studies at Cambridge, and taught at the University of London until his retirement in 1982. He is currently a visiting professor at the New School for Social Research in New York.

HOBSBAWM'S main area of research is 19th-century English labor history—not institutional history, but such subjects as the effect of the industrial revolution on the standard of living of workers, the relationship between the working classes and Methodism, and the nature of the "labor aristocracy." A later generation of radical historians, however, has been more interested in his work on "primitive rebels," a term that embraces "social bandits" of the Robin Hood type, "secret societies" like the Mafia, peasant millenarian movements, urban mobs, and religious labor sects. To the conventional Marxist, the continued existence of these "primitive" or "archaic" groups is an anomaly. But Hobsbawm, by defining them as a "social movement," has legitimized them and brought them into the Marxist schema. Thus they are seen as "the adaptation of popular agitations to a modern capitalist economy," "prepolitical" movements that do not aspire to the seizure of power but do promote a "political consciousness" that has made this century "the most revolutionary in history." It is this politicization of phenomena that are not generally regarded as political that the American Marxist historian Eugene Genovese finds so commendable: "To be 'Hobsbawmian' means to be Marxist"—to make the "politics of class struggle" central to history, and to make "historical materialism" central to Marxism.

Hobsbawm himself has described *Primitive Rebels* as "a political as well as a historical" work, and has explained the conjunction of personal circumstances that brought him to this subject in the 1950s: his extensive acquaintance with Italian Communists knowledgeable about the Mafia and his reading of Antonio Gramsci, a leading Italian Communist and Marxist, who made much of this kind of "nonpolitical protest movement"; an invitation to speak on the European precedents for the Mau-Mau uprisings in Kenya; and the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party in 1956, which inspired a reevaluation of the role of the party and the "bases of revolutionary activity"—the latter reflected in the implicit message of the book that while a "strongly organized party" is necessary, there is no "one railroad" that leads to the desired goal.

The reference to 1956 prompts Hobsbawm to observe that the chief effect of that momentous year was to "set us free to do more history, because before '56 we'd spent an enormous amount of our time on political activity." Yet he himself has continued to be politically active, both within the British Communist Party and abroad (in Latin America as well as Europe)—which makes it all the more remarkable that he has been so enormously productive as a historian, a journalist, and (under the pseudonym of Francis Newton) a commentator on jazz. It is an impressive personal accomplishment and a formidable contribution to Marxist historiography.

THE BEST KNOWN and in many ways the most exciting of this group is E. P. Thompson, who has inspired, in America especially, a host of scholars and disciples. The youngest of them (he was born in 1924), he joined the party soon after arriving at Cambridge. The war itself was more traumatic for him than for the others, his older brother (who had also been a Communist at Cambridge) having been executed by the Nazis while fighting with the Bulgarian partisans. Thompson himself served in the army and spent some months after the war as a railroad construction worker in Yugoslavia and Bulgaria. Returning to Cambridge to complete his degree, he met and married another historian, who was also a Communist—indeed a more active member of the Historians' Group than he. As an extramural lecturer at the University of Leeds, he devoted half his time to political activities; a member of the Yorkshire district committee of the Communist Party, he was chiefly responsible for the movement against the Korean War. In 1956 he emerged as one of the leading "dissident Communists," a founder of the *New Reasoner* and of its more influential successor, the *New Left Review*. He was forced off the board of the *Review* in 1962 when it came under the control of the faction led by Perry Anderson and Tom Nairn. At Warwick University in the 1960s, he became involved in the radical causes that convulsed that highly politicized university; he later resigned to devote himself to scholarship and politics.

IN retrospect it might appear that even in his years as a loyal party member, Thompson had displayed "deviationist" tendencies. Yet this may be more a matter of style than substance. He himself claims to see in his first book, a biography of William Morris, a "muffled 'revisionism.'" Yet when it was published in 1955, it was entirely in keeping with the party line. Indeed, as far back as 1934, even before the turn to the Popular Front, the party had tried to appropriate Morris as its spiritual and political ancestor by rescuing him from the "myth" of romantic medievalism and making of him an indigenous Marxist Communist. In 1976, shortly before the appearance of the second edition of his biography, Thompson commented on the "Morris/Marx argument" that still looms so large in his thinking:

> To defend the tradition of Morris (as I still do) entailed unqualified resistance to Stalinism. But it did *not* entail opposition to Marxism; rather, it entailed rehabilitating lost categories and a lost vocabulary in the Marxist tradition.

In fact there is nothing in the original edition of that book to suggest any "resistance to Stalinism." The deletions made in the second edition highlight what Thompson himself called the "Stalinist pieties" of the first edition: the slogan "All roads lead to Communism"; or the confident assertion that "were Morris alive today, he would not look far to find the party of his choice"; or the assurance that Morris's utopian vision of "A Factory as It Might Be" had

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been realized in the Soviet Union ("Today visitors return from the Soviet Union with stories of the poet's dream already fulfilled"); or the long quotation from Stalin that supposedly confirmed Morris's views by providing a "blueprint of the advance to Communism"; or the suggestion that Morris envisaged "the 'party of a new type' of Lenin—a party of militant *cadres* educated in Socialist theory, the vanguard of the working class, the spearhead 'which is to pierce the armour of Capitalism.' " The Morris of the revised edition, shorn of these "Stalinist pieties," is still a staunch Marxist revolutionary, committed to "scientific Socialism" and repelled by Fabianism, Reformism, and "semi-demi-Socialism."

IN HIS ACCOUNT of Thompson, Kaye inexplicably omits any discussion of the book on Morris. Yet without it one cannot truly understand Thompson's most celebrated work, *The Making of the English Working Class*, which was published in 1963 and is still the most influential book produced by any member of the Group. If its tone owes much to Morris, its thesis is more boldly Marxist than anything proposed by previous generations of radical and socialist historians. For it maintains that by 1832, even before the rise of Chartism, England witnessed the emergence of a single "working class" (in contrast to the "working classes" of common usage)—a class that was fully developed, fully conscious of its class identity and class interests, fully committed to the class struggle, politically organized to carry out that struggle, and ideologically receptive to an alternative economic and social system. If there was no actual revolution in England, the argument goes, it was only because the counter-revolutionary forces succeeded in repressing or suppressing it.

Put so baldly, the thesis is all too easily disputed. But Thompson does not put it so baldly; indeed, it is not the thesis itself that has made the book so influential. What has caught the imagination of a younger generation of radical historians is rather the passionate tone of the argument, the variety of evidence summoned in support of it, and the latitude given to the concepts and categories designed to accommodate it. Thus the "working class" is taken to include "the Sunderland sailor, the Irish navvy, the Jewish costermonger, the inmate of an East Anglian village workhouse, the compositor on *The Times*"—and many others who, by social status or occupation, are not normally regarded as belonging to a single "working class." Similarly, working-class "consciousness" is evoked by William Blake's poems as well as by folk ballads; the "class struggle" is exhibited in abortive uprisings, sporadic rick-burnings, Irish nationalist conspiracies, and clandestine, sectarian plots; "political organization" is attributed to Luddite machine-breakers, secret societies, and trade unions; and the "revolutionary" alternative to capitalism is found in any hostility to industrialism, any nostalgia for an old "moral economy" or yearning for a new moral order. In this long, eloquent, richly textured, and picturesque account, contradictions and anomalies have the perverse effect of appearing to validate a thesis that seems all the more persuasive precisely because it can contain all the contradictions and anomalies. What finally unites these disparate elements is the moral passion of the author, his overt personal commitment to the working class as he conceives it and to the revolutionary cause with which he identifies it.

ABOVE ALL it is the role assigned to "consciousness" in relation to class that has made Thompson the most influential, and at the same time the most controversial, of this group of Marxist historians. All of them (with the exception of Dobb) have departed, to one degree or another, from the more rigorous "classical" Marxist model, which relegates consciousness to the "superstructure," which, in turn, is derived from and determined by the material "base," the mode of production and class relations reflecting that mode. But none of the others has made consciousness so integral a part of the concept of class, while at the same time insisting upon the material base of consciousness itself.

And none has been so polemical in defending this form of Marxism—against the conventional historian who finds it still excessively Marxist, too materialistic and deterministic to accommodate the historical reality (Thompson himself describes his view of history as "materialistic"), as well as against the Althusserian or Leninist Marxist who finds it insufficiently Marxist, unduly empirical, sentimental, and moralistic. More than others, Thompson appeals to the currently fashionable "humanistic" Marxism associated with the young Marx. Yet he himself, while sometimes referring to the "early" Marx, does not make much of him, perhaps suspecting that the real young Marx was not quite what he has been made out to be. Instead Thompson claims to be recovering a "lost vocabulary" in the Marxist tradition, a vocabulary that, in Marx himself, "was partly a silence—unarticulated assumptions and unrealized mediations."

In recent years Thompson has devoted himself less to history than to politics, assuming the intellectual leadership of the European movement for nuclear disarmament. But he has also found time to engage in lengthy and heated debates. In 1973 he published a hundred-page "Open Letter to Leszek Kolakowski" (complete with 75 footnotes), berating the Polish philosopher for abandoning Marxism and communism. And in a series of essays amounting to a good-size volume, he has charged Perry Anderson and the other English "acolytes" of Althusser with moral obtuseness, "intellectual agoraphobia," and a new form of Stalinism.

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THE controversy between Thompson and Anderson, both claiming to be Marxists, raises once again the old questions about Marxist history. What does it mean to be a Marxist historian? How liberal or "revisionist" a construction can a Marxist historian today put upon the "materialist conception of history" and still remain a Marxist? To what extent must we take Marxism into account in understanding and evaluating the works of the Marxist historians? What, in short, is the relevance of their Marxism?

They themselves insist that it is relevant, that they are not merely historians but Marxist historians. Yet the non-Marxist historian may not be content with such an answer. For it is part of his creed that every work of history has to be evaluated on its own merits rather than by reference to some external philosophy or theory. This is in fact what scholarly reviewers have done. The most severe critiques (there have been several) have focused upon the individual book rather than upon the Marxist theory it exemplifies. Each has engaged the book in "empirical" terms, examining its facts and sources, assertions and generalizations, the logic of its argument and the substance of its thesis.

Some critics have even gone so far as to disallow any consideration of Marxism, as if that would be improper and invidious, rather like an ad hominem argument. This is a curious notion, and in itself an invidious one, for it refuses to take seriously what the Marxist historian takes most seriously. Does it really do justice to a work of history to ignore the theories and philosophy that the author himself invokes in support of his thesis? (Each of these historians quotes, sometimes copiously, from Marx, Engels, and often Lenin as well.) One of the happy by-products of the recently published memoirs is to release us from the convention that holds it improper to allude to their Marxism. If they find it so central to their work, if they think it important to identify themselves as Marxists, we can do no less.

There is one more subject that can be explored more candidly, now that the Marxist historians have taken the lead in doing so. That is the intimate (dialectical, a Marxist would say) relationship between history and politics—between writing about the past and acting in the present. Whatever differences Thompson has with Anderson, it is not likely that he would dispute Anderson's comment that each of Thompson's historical works is "a militant intervention in the present, as well as a professional recovery of the past." Nor would he, or any of the other Marxist historians, take issue with the introduction to *Visions of History* (1983)—a volume of interviews with Thompson, Hobsbawm, and other radical historians—which sums up their common concern with the "historical and political context" of their work, the way "their politics inform their practice as historians," and above all their commitment to Marx's dictum that the task is "not only to interpret the world but to change it." History, they might well say, is a continuation of politics by other means.

ONE RECALLS that Marx's dictum about changing the world rather than merely interpreting it was said not of historians but of philosophers, and that it implied the abolition of philosophy: "When reality is depicted, philosophy as an independent branch of activity loses its medium of existence." For Marx, philosophy's loss was history's gain—history as he understood it, "real," "scientific," "materialistic" history ("historical materialism" Engels was later to call it). It is this idea of history more than anything else—more than any specific ideas about class and class struggle, consciousness and culture, mode of production and social relations—that is the common denominator of Marxist history. Marxist historians can be "revisionist" about almost everything else in the Marxist canon, but they cannot separate politics from history. They cannot abandon, or even hold in abeyance, their political agenda of "changing" the world while they engage in the historical task of "interpreting" it.

The Marxist would say, quite rightly, that the work of every historian reflects a political bias of some sort, that the ideas, interests, and experiences of the historian inevitably intrude upon the writing of history, that the very process of selecting sources, presenting facts, and writing a coherent account necessarily presumes some conception of reality, some order of values, that precludes "objectivity." He might also go on to say that the Marxist, in being candid about his bias (unlike the "bourgeois" historian, who would conceal it, possibly even be ignorant of it), is giving the reader the opportunity to judge it and make allowance for it. This argument, however, shifts the burden of responsibility from the writer to the reader. The issue is not whether the reader can make the proper discriminations and judgments (he is generally not in a position to do so), but whether the historian has done so, whether *he* has made an effort to control and correct his bias, to look for the evidence that might confute his thesis, and to construct a thesis capable of confutation. The Marxist is generally so assured of the truth of his thesis that, as Hobsbawm says of the Group, the temptation is to invoke arguments "designed *a posteriori* to confirm what we already knew to be necessarily 'correct.' "

The Marxist, moreover, is committed to a theory of history so comprehensive—this is its great appeal—that his primary task is to find it confirmed at every decisive "moment" of history. Any significant exception would be a denial of the whole, since the theory itself is a whole. Where the "eclectic" or "empirical" historian (pejorative words in the Marxist vocabulary) tries to make sense of each subject in whatever terms seem appropriate to it, finding evidence of a class struggle in one event but not in another, giving priority to economics in one period and to religion in another, the Marxist historian is bound by a predetermined schema that applies to all periods and events. That schema may be modified, qualified, "revised," but in some basic sense it must be retained if Marxism itself is to be a meaningful part of his enterprise—and be meaningful for the present as well as the past, for politics as well as for history.

IN ADDITION to the burden of ideology, the Marxist is saddled with the burden—the incubus, some would say—of the party. The editors of the interviews in *Visions of History* explain that one of their questions could be put only to the older generation of historians: "How did the political repression of the cold war era affect you and your work?" But they did not think to put the corollary question: "How did the intellectual repression of the Communist Party affect you and your work?" Harvey Kaye makes much of the communality, purposiveness, and stimulation provided by the Communist Party Historians' Group. But he, too, says little of the constraints that membership in the party might have

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had upon their historical work, apart from citing the one inhibition mentioned by Hobsbawm: the fact that none of them, even after they left the party, seriously ventured into 20th-century history, especially the period following the establishment of the Communist Party. (At one point he suggests that Hobsbawm's "shortcomings" on the subject of "hegemony" might be due to his continued adherence to the Marxist "base-structure" model, which, in turn, might be related to his "continued membership in the Communist Party.")

IF there is a reluctance to confront the question of what loyalty to the Communist Party entails by way of discipline and conformity, there is an even more conspicuous refusal to confront the question of what loyalty to the Soviet Union entails—which is, after all, the sine qua non of membership in the party. Dobb was a member of the party for more than half a century, from the early 1920s until his death in 1976. Hobsbawm's membership covers a different half-century, from the early 1930s to the present. Hill and Hilton were members for about 20 years, and Thompson for about 15. A good deal of history is contained within those dates.

In his memoir Hobsbawm remarks upon the fact that "it was among the historians that the dissatisfaction with the Party's reactions to the Khrushchev speech at the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU first came into the open." But this makes it all the more remarkable that they had to wait for Khrushchev to tell them what the informed public had long since known. Both as historians and as party members, they had more reason than most to be aware of the highly publicized purges and trials of the 1930s, the executions and mass imprisonments, the precipitous changes in the party line requiring comrades to be Bolsheviks one week and Popular Fronters another, pro-war and anti-Fascist one day and anti-war and pro-German the next. (For almost two years, while their country was at war with Germany, British Communists had to defend the Hitler-Stalin pact.)

The heyday of the Historians' Group, from 1946 to 1956 (the era of "High Stalinism," as Thompson now calls it), was no less eventful, what with the purges of intellectuals, scientists, and artists as well as politicians and political dissidents; the official sponsorship of Lysenkoism and the condemnation

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of such forms of "bourgeois science" as the theory of relativity; the apotheosis of Stalin that Khrushchev later dubbed the "personality cult"; the trials in Hungary, Bulgaria, and Czechoslovakia reminiscent of the Moscow trials of the 1930s; and the "Doctor's Plot" of 1952-53, recalling that of 1938, with the exception that the later one was part of a more systematic campaign of anti-Semitism in the course of which a hundred or more Jewish intellectuals were shot. These were historians, after all, not naive scientists and artists, who lived through these events and who, as party members, tacitly sanctioned them.

In describing the meeting of the Group after Khrushchev's speech, Hobsbawm remarks upon the special sense of responsibility felt by the historians qua historians:

> The fact is that historians were inevitably forced to confront the situation not only as private persons and communist militants but, as it were, in their professional capacity, since the crucial issue of Stalin was literally one of history: what had happened and why it had been concealed.

One member protested that they had "stopped being historians" when they accepted the Soviet interpretation of current affairs, and that they "must become historians in respect of the present too." In retrospect Hobsbawm endorses that judgment: "Historical analysis," after all, "was at the core of Marxist politics."

YET they have not undertaken that historical analysis. One can understand why Hobsbawm, who has chosen to remain in the party, has not done so. But it is more difficult to understand the reticence of those historians who have left the party. "I commenced to reason," Thompson prefaces a volume of essays, "in my thirty-third year [1956, when he left the party], and despite my best efforts, I have never been able to shake the habit off." But even now he seems loath to give his reason free rein, lest it give comfort to the enemy. Although he has been more vigorous than the others in denouncing Stalinism, he has done so only in a polemical context. What he has not done is to bring his considerable historical talent to bear upon such considerable subjects as the relationship between Stalinism and Leninism, or Leninism and Marxism. In his "Open Letter" to Kolakowski, he prides himself on not following the "well-worn paths of apostasy," on not becoming a "Public Confessor and Renegade"—as if it would be disreputable to write a scholarly historical work on 20th-century communism, or a serious theoretical analysis of the compatibility of Marxism with the "Libertarian Communism" he now professes, or even a complete and candid memoir of his experiences in the party.

Kaye concludes his book by reaffirming the intimate relationship between politics and history, which is the guiding principle of the Marxist historians. In this respect, he says, they go beyond Marx—at least beyond the Marx who wrote that "the social revolution of the nineteenth century can only create its poetry from the future, not from the past," that the revolution "must let the dead bury their dead." More than Marx, they realize that the past is a "well of conclusions from which we draw in order to act," and that action itself requires a "historical education." "We must educate those for whom struggle is a determined necessity today with the historical experiences of those for whom struggle was a determined necessity yesterday." Similarly, the editors of *Visions of History* remind us that the radical historians "have much to teach us about the past and its bearing on the work of liberating the present."

We would all welcome such an education. A historical account of Marxism and communism in our time, written by historians who were personally involved in these movements, would surely be an edifying and liberating experience, for them as much as for us. Such a confrontation with the recent past might even induce them to reconsider the more distant past, possibly even inspire them to liberate themselves from the theories and assumptions they have applied to the past.

MAGICAL MYSTERY TOUR

So Far from God: A Journey to Central America by Patrick Marnham

(Viking/Elisabeth Sifton Books, 253 pp., $17.95)

The British would be less good at travel writing, and travel writing would seem less minor a genre, if the British literary traveler believed in the possibility of his own change. The colonial inheritance the British traveler assumes is his own modernity; the light baggage he carries into the "Third World" is irony from a Europe that's finished. Whether enthralled by the foreign (D. H. Lawrence in Mexico) or dismayed (Graham Greene) or merely (like Sybille Bedford) bemused, the British traveler remains apart, making a visor of his hand to shade his famous sensibility.

On a certain morning of an uncertain year, Patrick Marnham sits on an upturned suitcase in an obscure Mexican village. The tattered sign on the wall advises: "Buy your ticket four days ahead." But there are no tickets available from the boy whose job it is to sell tickets. So Patrick Marnham (barrister; former literary editor of the *Spectator*) sits on his suitcase and reads, as he waits, *The Red and the Black*.

So Far from God: A Journey to Central America offers persuasive evidence that Patrick Marnham is never less than a good sport. Despite the exceptions I intend to take to Marnham's conclusions about Latin America, I liked reading his book, a brandy and cigars sort of book, for it is consistently interesting, agreeably mixed in mood and tone, randomly but amusingly opinionated.

It is not enough by half to say that Marnham is patient with Mexico. He is enthralled by its routine ineptitude. His book begins in California ("that part of America which is so far into the future that it is practically detached from the continent"). Marnham grows impatient with California's Hawaiian motels and haute hygiene. He expresses "heartfelt relief" upon his arrival in Tijuana.

Palm Sunday in Mexico City: Marnham attends a "splendidly chaotic high mass" at the national cathedral. Two unsynchronized gentlemen are attempting to lead the congregation in a

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19th-century hymn. The crowd of Indian worshipers, nevertheless, insists upon its own latent tempi, while a boy hawks palms up and down the main aisle. Somewhere in the crowd a transistor radio is playing. Elegant *damas* wipe their pews with white handkerchiefs before kneeling to pray. Gringos crowd the side aisles calling to one another and taking photographs, "as though they were in a fun-fair."

MUCH of Marnham's journey is this jaunty, especially at the beginning, before he leaves Mexico for the war zones of Central America. But in order for the chaos of Mexico to strike him as panache, rather than as evidence of civic breakdown, Marnham has to keep moving. His last appointment in Mexico City is with a diplomat "no longer amused." "It's all right for you," the diplomat tells Marnham. "But I have to *live* here."

The limitation of most travel literature is exactly this—the freedom to skip out. The traveler is never impeded by a psychic snag that cannot be ransomed. Rather, Mexico translates Marnham, reduces him, he says, to a good-natured "torpor." He dozes as he is driven to the Guatemalan border by "the least reassuring bus driver I could remember."

What distinguishes *So Far from God* from other books that share the same comic equator is the presence of a spire. Marnham is after something that matters beyond scenery or misadventure. Marnham is looking for the soul of Latin America. In his introduction, Marnham tells us that his book was stimulated by two interests. "I had been interested in New Spain for several years. . . . I was intrigued by the ruins of an earlier empire which had died as the British empire gathered strength." Marnham admits, additionally, to being intrigued by "the political activity of the Catholic Church in Latin America."

Odd motives for traveling? I think most of the great British literary travelers have been smitten with Mexico because she is so celebrated a Catholic. Mexico is opposite to Protestant America. (Marnham dismisses America as Britain's "monstrous child.") Mexico is other, the incarnation of Renaissance England's 16th-century antagonist. Mexico is Spanish and medieval, haunting, therefore, as the opposite, the dusky, New World possibility.

"Poor Mexico," the Mexicans like to sigh with characteristic self-pity. "Poor Mexico! So far from God, so close to the United States." Custom credits the remark to Porfirio Díaz, one of Mexico's corrupt, not ineffective dictator-presidents. Marnham has borrowed the commonplace for his title. This book, however, is not really about the shadow of the United States. In fact, once San Diego melts in the exhaust of a Mexican bus, the United States scarcely figures. More nearly encroaching on present-day Mexico is a castellated shadow thrown from medieval Spain. Spain's conquest still claims the land—her inquisitions, the gold she took, the faith she left buried in Mexico.

THE central fact about Mexico is miscegenation. By the early 18th century there were more Mexicans of mixed race than there were "pure" Spaniards. Today, the overwhelming population is mestizo. Marnham knows this, tells us so. Nevertheless Marnham regularly insists on distinguishing between "Indians" (most of the peasants he meets) and "whites." Indeed, by the time he gets to Central America—Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua—Marnham implies that the civil wars amount to a kind of modern Indian uprising, a conflict due more to race than to class.

The marriage of Indian and European is what differentiates the Spanish colonial adventure from that of England. Think of the English in India, in Africa. In North America, the English settler and the Indian regarded each other across centuries; they remain separate still. The achievement of the North American settlement was that English Puritan notions of individuality and freedom (the seeds of modernity) were planted on New World soil.

The Spanish, by contrast, came to plunder. But Spanish galleons towed in their wake the transcendent Catholic baldachin, a medieval dream of one world. In the history of colonialism few ideas are as significant as Catholicism's insistence that the Indians had souls—were, therefore, spiritually the European's equal. The Indian was converted into the European, but the Spanish, too, were changed. A rape became a marriage. A new race was cast, but more important, a mestizo culture was born, which became Mexico, Catholic Mexico. Mexican Catholicism becomes the metaphor of Mexico's union because it was the instrument that forged the union. It was impossible in colonial Mexico to say where the bullfight began and the Indian blood ritual ended. It is impossible in Mexico to say where the European ends and the Indian begins.

For Patrick Marnham, the union of Indian and Spaniard has proved merely "explosive." The mix has not taken. He tells stories of how the "Indians" have bewildered Catholic priests over the

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centuries, how Catholicism has failed to snuff the ancient gods. And surely he is right, to a point. Where Catholicism tried to extinguish old faiths, the Church failed. But the last genius of the Spanish Church was its syncretism. The Church flourished where it tolerated, attaching the pagan baby to an already fabulous bosom.

In Latin America today, the pervasive religious icon is Our Lady of Guadalupe, the Virgin Mary who appeared to a 16th-century Indian peasant. Marnham notes the great devotion paid this Mary; in Mexico City he visits her shrine, and derives some pleasure at the commingling of sacred and profane to be found there. But Marnham interprets the Guadalupe's significance as some colonial trick: "Here was divine confirmation that the conquest was God's work." What Marnham misses is that the Virgin of Guadalupe is, astonishingly, Indian. She is brown. Her robes are of colors reserved for Aztec royalty. Iconographically, she eclipses the sun, she subdues the moon—the greatest of the Aztec gods. She is greater than these. This Mary speaks in the language of the Aztecs, not in Spanish. Her purpose is the Indian. The Spanish bishop in Mexico City is her legendary comic adversary.

Marnham's weakness on Guadalupe is surprising because he has written previously about the Virgin Mary. (An earlier travel book, *Lourdes: A Modern Pilgrimage*, was concerned with the French shrine to the Virgin.) And, too, Marnham is Catholic. He confesses himself in one line, in the middle of the book, in the middle of a conversation with an old man in Guatemala. ("I am *Catolico*.") His admission may not strike the reader as revelation, for already Marnham has taken us through church after church. He allows himself the funny thought in churches, but he hangs around them too often and far too long to be mistaken for an enthusiast of the baroque. It is not too much to say that this book leans at the precipice of spiritual autobiography. Marnham fashions diatribes against the "boring" modern world from which he has come; he nearly condescends to confraternity with the quality of soul he finds in Latin America: "These people's behavior frequently seemed absurd; their manner was frivolous and their life was a pose but all the same they seemed to know what was important." The author remains too enigmatic (too shy?) to fall forthrightly. One never gets a fully articulated vision of what he rejects, of what he aspires to.

One gathers—as Catholics will—from scattered evidence that Marnham's Catholicism is of the Farm Street variety. Certainly he is angry with the post-Vatican Council Church, which has abandoned certain "authority" in favor of some pretty skittish forays into the modern world. The buffoon priest is a recurrent figure in Marnham's book:

> In Panama City, I had watched [a priest], from New England, give a television show. For half an hour this pitiable wreck of a man pranced before an invited audience, dressed in a black suit and dog collar. "Let's celebrate Life," he howled over the noise of his piano; "Get off your butt, get out of that rut." All the while he wiggled his hips in a grotesque imitation of the Twist. "I want you all to go home, look in the mirror and say 'Hi, Gorgeous.' That's what the Gospel's all about," he said.

Nearly 50 years ago Graham Greene wrote, in *The Power and the Glory*, about a whiskey priest who struggles to keep Catholicism alive during Mexico's anticlerical persecutions. Nearly 50 years later Patrick Marnham remarks an irony:

> . . . The whiskey priest despairs of his Mexican-Indian flock. Faced with the fanatical hostility of a Marxist persecution they were beginning to drop away. . . . It did not occur to me when I first read Graham Greene's novel that it would be the priests who reduced spirituality to superstition; perhaps it did not occur to the novelist either.

Marnham argues, plausibly, that the "Indians" have remained religious, outdistancing the spirituality of their priests. Less plausibly, he implies that the "Indian" was never really converted to Christianity, just as the Spanish colonial imposition never really took. As he travels through Central America, sees soldiers and roadblocks, hears rumors of violence, Marnham intones: "What has failed in New Spain is a religious failure. Christianity could not make these cynical, quick-witted people moral."

IN *Fantastic Invasion*, his collection of essays on Africa, Marnham was similarly preoccupied with colonialism, especially well-meaning modern variants such as the international ecology movement. It is the folly of the "north" to think that it can save Africa, Marnham implies. Africa would be better off solving her own problems her own way. A comparable conclusion floats *So Far from God*. Cortés should

SAPPHO: TO APHRODITE

Artfully enthroned Aphrodite, deathless
child of Zeus and weaver of wiles I beg you
please don't hurt me, don't overcome my spirit,
goddess, with longing,

but come here, if ever at other moments
hearing these my words from afar you listened
and responded: leaving your father's house, all
golden, you came then,

hitching up your chariot: lovely sparrows
drew you quickly over the dark earth, whirling
on close-feathered wings from the heights of heaven
down through the sky and

instantly arrived—and then O my blessed
goddess with a smile on your deathless face you
asked me what the matter was *this* time, what I
called you for this time,

what I now most wanted to happen in my
raving heart: "Whom *this* time should I persuade to
take you back again to her love? Who *now*, oh
Sappho, who wrongs you?

If she flees you now, she will soon pursue you;
if she won't accept what you give, she'll give it;
if she doesn't love you, she'll love you soon now,
even unwilling."

Come to me again, and release me from this
want past bearing. All that my heart desires to
happen—make it happen. And stand beside me,
goddess, my ally.

JIM POWELL

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never have come. "He should have turned back to Cuba, to his dice and his saints and his women, and left the Indians with the Gods they honour, against all odds, to this day."

Well, but Mexico exists. Cortés did not turn back. The arrival of Cortés, moreover, was not the tragedy of Mexico. The tragedy of Mexico is that she was sired by a colonial empire that was in its decline. Medieval Spain could only bequeath to the new land ideas and structures of government that were already decaying in Europe. Mexico's gold kept the Spanish crown in business until the revolution of the 19th century. Spain was rejected, as Mexico turned to England and France for models of modernity. Mexican liberals imported ideas of progress and democracy whole.

Mexico is without an 18th century, Octavio Paz has finely written. What Mexico lacks is the intellectual link with which to bind its past to its present. Officially, the colonial era is repudiated. Officially, liberal Mexico honors only its Indian mother. Officially, the colonial Church is disgraced—priests are outlawed from appearing in public as priests. Marnham notices that there is only one statue to Cortés in Mexico City, just as he correctly identifies the predicament unevolved modernism has placed upon Mexico: by lamenting the conquest, the Mexicans "are lamenting their own existence."

In Nicaragua, where he ends his own journey, Marnham sees the struggle between the ideologies of East and West as reducible to something like Hatfields and McCoys. In a country as small as Nicaragua, this may be so. Also in Nicaragua, Marnham throws together some conclusions as he edges toward the exit. He speculates, for example, that Marxism might just give Latin America—what colonial Christianity failed to impress—a public morality, "at least to the extent of providing honest government, something to release them from the greed and violence which have shaped the course of their lives for so long."

My own sense is that any ideology that lands in Latin America—whether Western democracy or oriental Marxism—will have to be as catholic as Christianity has been. Any solution to Latin America's political violence and poverty will have to be compatible with what has gone before, even as the Virgin of Guadalupe was compatible with the deities she followed. The genius of Latin America is precisely its ability to assimilate—its resistance to institutions and ideas that are merely imposing. It is a place of marriage.

Poor Mexico! Poor Mexico! Such has been Mexico's whining lament, her self-pity, her excuse—her sigh under the burden of colonialism and her fear of the Yanqui. Poor Mexico! This has also been the way modern Europe and North America have looked upon Mexico, indeed on all of Latin America. Protestant America's version of Mexico portrays only victimization—conquistadores ruthlessly destroying temples; palming gold; the padres bedazzling poor Indians with bright oranges in exchange for their souls; the massacres by gunshot and smallpox and syphilis.

I do not intend to understate the cruelty of the colonial era in Latin America. Neither do I celebrate Mexico's rape. But I will celebrate the fruit of that rape—the mestizo nation. Latin America is more than a victim of European designs. The mestizo exists in body and soul, uniting separate epics. The mestizo thereby redeems Europe's sins and lingering guilts.

When I started Patrick Marnham's book, I was excited by the possibility that here was to be a strong Anglo-Catholic defense of the Spanish creation. Mexico as more than victim. Mexico as New World miracle. In the end, however, Marnham merely adds a high tone to what we have heard before. "Poor Mexico! So far from God . . ." Marnham leaves Nicaragua unchanged, presumably.

RICHARD RODRIGUEZ

Richard Rodriguez is working on a book about Mexico and California.

THE SCREWTAPE COLUMNS

Right Reason
by William F. Buckley, Jr.
edited by Richard Brookisher

(Doubleday, 454 pp., $19.95)

On the cover of this latest collection of William Buckley's newspaper columns is the photograph (presumably he had a say in selecting it) of a man ill at ease with himself, looking out on the world as if from a battlement, fearing that some blow must fall from an unexpected quarter. The head is held taut, hunched back on his shoulders, as if it had once been severed, sewn back on, and can be moved now only stiffly, as in fact he moves it on television. The chin juts forward—the cut of the jib, as yachtsmen say—in defiance more than in strength. I dare you, find my weakness! The mouth, otherwise sensual, is set mum; the corners fall away expressionless. This is a man, one would say, who needs to see his priest.

Yet Mr. Buckley is thought from his public appearances—which are all self-presentations, in the lecture hall, on television, or in after-dinner speeches—to be debonair, arrogant, cocksure, witty (always witty), in control equally of himself, of the stage, and of his antagonist. But even on those set occasions, he seldom seems relaxed, satisfied with the way he is, with the world as it is. He seems unable to enjoy even his leisure without making a point and a book (usually with as much substance as a leaflet) out of it.

Mr. Buckley, one suspects, is a far unhappier man than he would like us to see; and since unhappiness is a condition with which the conservative must live, but one which the American conservative, being an American, will not set himself to face and find some way to master without illusion, Mr. Buckley ought to be a far more interesting man than he has allowed himself to become. He could have gone deeper.

Winston Churchill, although he met life publicly with a zest hard to parallel in our times, suffered from lifelong, recurrent, deep depressions. Men of action often do; the action, though meant to subdue these moods, does not subdue them. Churchill called them his "black dog," which loped, pad! pad!

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pad! relentlessly behind him; and surely what tells is that he knew his black dog would never be gone. Mr. Buckley, I suspect, has a black dog. But we do not hear it pad in his writing. He tells us that he is not "good introspection," a dismissal so offhanded that one can hardly believe it was made. The result is that he is interesting not for what he has written, but for what he has not written; not for the conservative he claims to be, but for the conservative he is not; not for his facile gifts, always on display, but for his deserted, undernourished gifts.

IN ANY HISTORY of our century long enough to spare a sentence for him, Mr. Buckley will be rightly praised for what he did in the 1950s, through both *National Review* and his individual efforts on university and college campuses to seek out, enthuse, and help organize young conservatives who are in many cases the leaders, junior officers, and even foot soldiers of today's conservative regime. Young Americans for Freedom, for example, owes a great deal to him; and cadres of young conservatives, inspired and assisted by him, grew as silently as a coral reef under the very noses of the reigning Democrats and liberals. Nobody can take that away from him.

Beyond that we have Mr. Buckley's magazine. In its early missionary days it was brash, often reckless, sometimes unscrupulous in argument, but at least it was interesting and significant. Now it is a thrown-together hodgepodge of stale attitudinizing and new mediocre argument, when it is not simply the Buckley family newsletter. The old *National Review* and the new have one thing in common, though: a capacity to be extremely unpleasant, especially in kicking a man when he is down.

Then there is *Firing Line*. I remember distinctly only one of its programs; the others have more or less passed away as television waffle. Buckley was talking to Malcolm Muggeridge, a late convert to religious faith in general and to Roman Catholicism in particular. Born and raised a Catholic, Mr. Buckley led Mr. Muggeridge, himself an agile debater, to many fences a Catholic should be able to take without much trouble; but more than once Mr. Muggeridge was straddled. The question pursued by Mr. Buckley was whether Mr. Muggeridge's faith was true, or whether he had sought faith merely for the reason most commonly used to justify it: that it would be good for Mr. Muggeridge and for society, much like a dose of salts. This was a Buckley from whom we hear too little. He was speaking and questioning from somewhere deeper than the glibness to which he is usually satisfied to reach. It seemed no accident that I sat listening to him and hardly to his guest, while the dusk fell in my room as it can do at evensong on an autumn afternoon.

SO we come to his columns. The pickings in this collection come from seven years of Mr. Buckley's effusions, and since he and the editor presumably chose what they considered the best columns, the collection is a fairly damning commentary on the general standard. I do not know why journalists think it worth collecting these rags of ephemeral writing, some of them trivial even as they are written, certainly almost all of them trivial the day after they were first printed. (Of course there have been journalists such as Joseph Kraft who do not package their columns, though his deserved packaging more than most.) Just how trivial they can be is illustrated in this volume by an ad hominem attack on me, notable mainly for its misinformation, inspired by a little column I wrote during the heat of the election campaign of 1980. Who cares? Mr. Buckley boasts that he spends 18 minutes on a column. It shows. He also boasts that he takes only two months to write a book; that shows, too.

It is more than a matter of taste that I cannot join the applause for Mr. Buckley's style, for its supposed elegance, urbanity, wit, variety, sophistication. There are not many stylists in American journalism or politics, and consequently those who seem to have mastered the art of writing a sentence with more than one clause, or turning a phrase, or using words of more than two syllables, are always overpraised. Mr. Buckley's trademark—his robot's use of words that few of us, I hope, think to use in ordinary speech—is worse than tiresome. Nothing is gained, for example, by the use of "mephitic" in discussing a review of one of his books, or of "anaphora" in a piece about Jesse Jackson's rhetoric. But one soon realizes that Mr. Buckley needs these crutches because he almost never finds the unexpected right word in the right place in his writing. The unexpected word (the coin particularly of the poet) is usually a common-and-garden one, a word we use every day. Almost never a fancy word, it stabs into our minds with meaning, and there it is likely to stay. But even if Mr. Buckley's self-consciously arcane words give some people a thrill, why is it that no one can remember them or their point a few days later?

AN EXAMPLE. Mr. Buckley describes *Playboy* as "an organ that seeks to justify the superordination of sex over any other consideration. . . ." Apart from the fact that "superordination" tells us nothing that a simpler word would not have done, it conceals—and, I believe, is intended to conceal—the fact that Mr. Buckley is saying the opposite of what is true. *Playboy* does not give a superior rank to sex above all other considerations. It diminishes and debases sex, reducing it to a valueless, mechanical, lifeless, and altogether unimportant activity, which you can order up with your meal after a hard day at the office. But then if Mr. Buckley had found an accurate word, he would have had to say something that celebrated sex; and it is interesting that in his columns, as in the pronouncements of so many conservatives today, sex only raises its head when the subject is pornography or obscenity, or what is regarded as aberrant sexual behavior. These conservatives discuss sex only when they can get down and mix it in the gutter with the pimps.

Too often Mr. Buckley seems to shy away from any serious discussion of principles or ideas. Instead, he personalizes them. He is most comfortable attacking (usually snidely) his opponents and flattering (always excessively) his friends. This is the manner of talk show, or at best of dinner party conversation, where we do not expect to unfold ideas as in a Socratic dialogue. In conversation we use people as symbols of ideas, setting them up rather like ninepins, because conversation needs such a shorthand; we can impatiently call someone, say, a fascist, confident that no one (unless there is a fool at dinner) will go away thinking that we really think he is a fascist. But if you transfer that manner to a column—which, I suppose, is what is likely to happen if you dictate it into a tape recorder while being driven somewhere in one of your cars—then it becomes unacceptable, in

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part because more care is needed when one cannot hear the inflection of a voice or see an expression on a face.

For example, I can imagine myself feeling provoked enough to refer in conversation to the representatives of Third World countries at the United Nations as "the little creeps." But use that phrase (as Mr. Buckley does) in print and it takes on an altogether different and very nasty character. What is more, if writing is intended to force one to strive for accuracy, he probably means not that they are little creeps but that they are much worse.

Again, did Mr. Buckley really mean to write that Jesse Jackson is "the greatest political aphrodisiac since Martin Luther King, Jr."? Not only is the phrase by now tired, drained of all power even to titillate—*it* certainly is not an aphrodisiac—but only three pages before Mr. Buckley differentiated Jackson from King, saying that he could not claim to be continuing "Martin Luther King's dream." In this same piece, he describes Jackson's appeal to the self-consciousness of American blacks (as blacks) as "this exuberant tribalism." Of course one can see the temptations to speak that into the tape recorder; but apart from the fact that it is a wholly false metaphor, most of us, if tempted to use it, would realize that it carries more than a hint that we still think of American blacks as just down from the trees.

ANOTHER of Mr. Buckley's personalizing devices directly reflects the manner of the talk show. Again and again he sets up his opponents as straw men and then takes potshots at them. Thus in one of Mr. Buckley's columns in 1981, A. Bartlett Giamatti, then the president of Yale, is not simply criticized for what he said about the Moral Majority. He is set up at the start not as someone who is putting forward an argument, but as someone who "fulminates in the big leagues," someone who can be put down by asking of him, "what on earth is exciting Mr. Giamatti?" (His column attacking me also began by saying that I was overexcited about the Moral Majority.)

The flattery of his friends and allies, of editors and others in the media who can assist in the promotion of his own celebrity, is not only embarrassing and tedious (and often unbelievably coy for someone over 17), it also has the effect of diminishing them to tools and reflections of his own lust for stardom. He and John Kenneth Galbraith have for a long time been doing a song-and-dance act together, teasing each other like flirtatious ten-year-olds, lifting their skirts and opening their flies to show what is underneath; there is more of that in the columns in this collection. ("Professor Galbraith has a nice wisecrack—as one would expect, self-serving . . ."; Galbraith to Buckley: "Out of friendship and a well-known ability to corrupt, I am concealing your whole relationship with Waugh." Why don't they just go out on the school playground and pull each other's braids?) But when they use their skittishness to suggest that each symbolizes a serious political position, then another diminishment takes place, as even their own ideas are made subservient to their mutual infatuation and self-promotion.

AS IN *National Review* (and not only in Buckley's signed column, but in the awful feature that purports to carry samples of his own correspondence), and as in the books about his own way of life, the dominant note in these columns is the unceasing "I . . . I . . . I . . . me . . . me . . . me . . ." The "Introductory Epilogue" of 22 pages about the reception of the hardback edition of *Overdrive* is a piece of self-puffery that tells us nothing about any of its alleged subjects: writing, or magazine editing, or publishing, or reviewing. It tells us only that his book got some attention (even if it was critical) from a number of celebrities whose names he has the chance to drop. But the most elaborate section of this piece is the toadying to William Shawn, the editor of the *New Yorker*, who now and then adds to Mr. Buckley's self-esteem and celebrity by serializing his books. An effort to camouflage the toadying is made by using very characteristic and heavy-handed hyperbole: "I would do anything for Mr. Shawn save joining the Communist Party." (What if Mr. Shawn asked him to do a hatchet job on Mr. Galbraith?) "If St. Peter had declared me unfit to enter the Kingdom of God, I could not have felt more searingly the reproach" from Mr. Shawn that he misuses the comma.

Through it all, what we are given is the world as seen by the media, and that distorted picture as seen by a celebrity who adores being on the talk shows. McCarthyism is discussed through his account of his own con-

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tribution to a BBC radio documentary; hard porn through his appearance on the Merv Griffin show; Russian propaganda through his experience on "Nightline"; and so on and so on, including his own experiences in flying here, there, and everywhere, and above all his encounters with other celebrities. He can't even write about peanut butter without dragging in Auberon Waugh, the kind of Brit writer who is always fashionable among the American fashionable: "I introduced Auberon Waugh to cashew butter. . . . It quite changed his writing style." It's this, not peanut butter, that makes one sick.

WHAT DOES this besotted search for celebrity, for being known by those who are known and advertising that he is known by them, leave of the conservative? Here one comes to the most interesting point of all. There are Americans who eccentrically believe that William F. Buckley is an aristocrat; whether he believes it or not, he does nothing to discourage the image. But an aristocrat would be as unlikely to fraternize with the media as he would be to write a personal letter on a word processor. What is more, an aristocrat takes to his estate and stays there, and grumbles even if called to London twice a year for an important vote in the Lords. He is rooted like an oak, in his daily life and in his conception of his place in things.

But Mr. Buckley is forever on the move, forever active, forever in flight (with seven heavy suitcases for him and his wife). *Cruising Speed, Atlantic High, Overdrive*: these are not accidental titles for the books about his life. Mr. Buckley, like almost all American conservatives, needs to learn to sit still. Then he might contemplate, which is the true activity of the conservative. Unlike the liberal or the socialist or the reformer, the conservative does not believe that the sun can be made to shine every day, or that every century can be improved over its predecessor. He knows that mankind can slip back as well as go forward.

Mr. Buckley has disappointed us since his youthful brilliance—surely he must have hauntingly disappointed himself—by never giving himself the time to sit still. Indeed, his restlessness seems to have grown more agitated with age, as if he is trying to preserve or rediscover that irretrievable youth. In the end the restlessness speaks of rootlessness. Return to the picture on the cover. It is not the face of a rooted man, freed at least from one anxiety.

William F. Buckley represents, in the end, the rich and the intelligentsia newly incarnated as The Masses, just as Ortega y Gasset said they would be. The rich prole, the prole rich—they are The Masses in our time, not the gas station attendant: restless and rootless, with nothing left in them to resist the mass media. They succumb to the celebrity that is all, in place of fame, that The Masses are willing to confer as a reward, a self-defeating reward, as fickle as The Masses themselves. Look at Mr. Buckley and read him: there stands the quintessential Common Man of our age.

HENRY FAIRLIE

CORRESPONDENCE, *from page 6*

underestimates the damage that Gramm-Rudman will do to programs that are vital to many Americans. Saying that it is easy to balance the budget, he dismisses the problems with a wave of his hand: they are just "political."

But is it just political when we stand against cutting cancer research? When we struggle for more funding for polio immunizations and for AIDS research? When we try to preserve a decent Medicare program for the elderly and disabled or a feeding and prenatal care program for poor women and children?

I think not. The reason we have trouble cutting domestic programs is because we have already spent four years cutting them. David Stockman himself admitted there was little left to cut. Most of the spending that is left is for programs that Americans want and need.

Mr. Kinsley is right when he says that the administration and Congress have lacked the will to attack tax loopholes and defense spending with the same vigor. He is right that we should turn our attentions here, too. But it will not be easy when the White House wields veto threats against all tax bills, even cigarette taxes, and spends all its political capital on raising defense spending.

HENRY A. WAXMAN
Chairman, House Committee on Energy and Commerce
Washington, D.C.

NOT SO NOIR

To the editors:

Stanley Kauffmann's lament over the state of contemporary film culture in "After the Film Generation" (December 16) is, alas, all too justified. The crisis of mediocrity in film and contemporary film studies is embarrassingly apparent to anyone teaching film today. The heart sinks at the prospect of a new generation for whom the work of Spielberg, Lucas, Allen, or De Palma represents the highest expression of which the human spirit is capable.

And yet I believe things are not entirely as dark as your reviewer paints them. There is a body of contemporary American film that is the equal of anything that emerged out of Italy or France in the 1950s and 1960s. John Cassavetes, Shirley Clarke, James Ivory, Paul Morrissey, Morris Engel, Elaine May, Robert Kramer, and the late Barbara Loden have, functioning as independent filmmakers, produced a body of work during the last 15 years that is second to none in the history of film. It is only the vulgarity and meretriciousness of contemporary film criticism and reviewing—to which Mr. Kauffmann's writing is a notable exception—that has prevented the general recognition of this group of classic contemporary works and artists.

RAYMOND CARNEY
Professor of English and film
Middlebury College
Middlebury, Vermont

TRB, *from page 4*

conversion of low-rent apartments into high-cost condominiums, and to build new, affordable housing.

But these enterprises require collaboration from the community as well as cooperation and some money from the government. They don't promise much in the way of media exposure, and as Reagan and Snyder have proved, it is the camera that raises consciousness in America. The homeless take on new meaning when a poorhouse is transformed into a stage set. Ridgewell's donated $4,000 worth of food for the Snyder affair, and put its tuxedoed waiters on loan for the night. As its president, Jeff Ellis, commented: "It is kind of neat to be a part of this [movie]. And it gives me a selfish feeling that I have done something to help the homeless."

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NEW YORK DIARIST

At Your Own Risk

AS IF THE JOKES about living near New Jersey weren't bad enough, I recently learned that the house where I spent my boyhood in Rockland County, New York, is radioactive. I discovered the news secondhand on the front page of the *Washington Post*. Our house was one of 322,000 in the mid-Atlantic region that had the bad fortune to be situated right smack over a "geological formation of uranium and porous granite" called the Reading Prong. The Prong, extending from northwestern Pennsylvania to the Hudson Valley of New York State, is an active source of radon, an odorless radioactive gas that causes lung cancer. The gas seeps through the foundations and stays for quite a while if you don't open up the windows a lot. We always used the air conditioner. I'm starting to feel like Meryl Streep in that scary scene in *Silkwood* when she returns from work one day to find a bunch of men dressed in space suits and carrying Geiger counters scraping the paint off the walls. Radon makes saccharin look like Tofu. The residents of one Pennsylvania house were told that the amount of radon they'd absorbed would have the same effect on their lungs as having 455,000 chest X rays a year or puffing 220 packs of cigarettes a day. And to think of all those years I've been sitting in the nonsmoking section.

WELL, I GUESS I can deal with radioactive gas, but a meltdown is another story. I live about 15 miles from the Indian Point nuclear reactor in Westchester County. When Consolidated Edison built the plant, it went out of its way to choose a safe location. But it turns out that Indian Point is squatting on a geological fault that runs right along the Ramapo Mountains in southern New York. Sure enough, last fall we had an earthquake that registered about 4.0 on the Richter scale. A spokesman for Con Ed reassured the public that although the company did declare an "unusual event" warning during the tremor, everybody could relax because the facility was constructed to withstand an earthquake with a magnitude of *five* points on the Richter scale. Ah, security.

WHERE HAVE all the women gone? Mayor Ed Koch's main opponent last fall, former City Council president Carol Bellamy, was the foremost woman officeholder in the state until she was trounced in the Democratic primary. The incumbent basically out-jabbered her in a series of moronic debates. Republican challenger Diane McGrath fared little better with her apocalyptic AIDS-hysteria campaign in the November general election. Meanwhile Senator Alfonse D'Amato has managed to dissuade the rest of the female field from running against him for the U.S. Senate in 1986. Brooklyn District Attorney Elizabeth Holtzman, who made her career putting Nixon aides in the hot seat during the Watergate hearings, simply avoided a hopeless campaign against the crowd-pleasing Republican incumbent. And Geraldine Ferraro, considered a prime contender, bowed out last month in order to tidy up her chaotic financial affairs. (With the power vacuum sucking at full force, now comes word that former representative Bella Abzug, once known as Blabzug, is interested in a Westchester congressional seat. Her hat, literally and figuratively, is back in the ring.) Those who conclude from all of this that women can't make it in New York politics are wrong, though: incumbent demagogues are usually unbeatable regardless of gender.

WHAT DO MARIO CUOMO and William F. Buckley Jr. have in common? Not much, except that both have been trying lately to arrange for the release of a convicted murderer from a New York state prison. On September 13, 1968, prison inmates Gary McGivern, Charles Culhane, and Robert Bowerman, en route to a court appearance under the custody of two deputy sheriffs, attempted an escape. In the gunfight that followed, Bowerman and one of the deputies were killed. McGivern and Culhane were later found guilty of murder. It was McGivern, however, who became the darling of the criminal-coddling intelligentsia of the 1970s, a group led for years by Norman Mailer. Cuomo joined Buckley and Allen Ginsberg in 1979 when he took up McGivern's cause with then-governor Hugh Carey, who rejected a request for clemency. This past New Year's Eve, Governor Cuomo finally granted McGivern clemency, thereby making him eligible for immediate parole. Cuomo has been politically untouchable in office thus far, so Republicans naturally are trying to make an issue out of the governor's actions. All 56 Republicans in the State Assembly called on the parole board to reject McGivern's application. A White House political strategist raised the issue with Anthony Colavita, the New York State Republican chairman, suggesting he use it in the upcoming gubernatorial race. Cuomo claimed to be outraged by such "distasteful" partisan meddling. But Cuomo had no right to object. He never provided any justification for the clemency grant. McGivern is a lifelong criminal with four separate felony convictions in addition to his current sentence. The forensic evidence that linked McGivern to the slaying convinced two juries and the state appeals court. What did Cuomo know or believe that should have overridden those verdicts? Nothing, in the judgment of the parole board, which unanimously rejected Cuomo's appeal for clemency. The real question now is: Why hasn't Buckley learned his lesson yet? In the 1970s Buckley helped obtain the release of Edgar Smith, convicted of killing a 15-year-old girl. Smith wrote a book asserting his innocence while on death row. Six years out of jail, he tried to kill a woman in California and later admitted his guilt in the original murder. The trouble with Buckley is that he doesn't know how to quit when he's behind.

STILL, CUOMO LOOKS unbeatable for reelection this November. After all, who wants to run against presidential material? So far the Republicans haven't offered a sacrificial lamb for the race. Even noncandidate Roy Cohn, one of Manhattan's most feared barristers, is a confirmed Cuomophobe. Cohn told *Manhattan,inc.* magazine that he once saw Cuomo do something "that *scared* me." During a debate with millionaire Lewis Lehrman back in 1982, Cuomo grabbed Lehrman by the arm so that everyone could see his opponent's fancy wristwatch. Cuomo then asked the audience, "Now, how many of you can afford a watch this expensive?" Cohn was impressed. "If I were Reagan, I'd stay a million miles away from anywhere Cuomo is." Or wear a Timex.

E.T.B.

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The Mitey Barons with their manager, Ken Flaherty, Suncor Public Affairs Coordinator. Ft. McMurray, Canada.

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